DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE MODEL

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The ability to understand and influence foreign decision makers within the cultural terrain is increasingly recognized as a core warfighter competency. In response to this requirement, the U.S. Department of Defense has made it a priority to foster the development of cultural competence via education and training curricula within its service arms. The objective of this report was to develop a 3C model for the General Purpose Force population in the U.S. military, based on data from operators with experience in various cross-cultural environments, which provides prioritization, organization, and specification. A model, which prioritizes those cross-cultural competencies that are most important.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Problem: The ability to understand and influence foreign decision makers within the cultural terrain is increasingly recognized as a core warfighter competency. In response to this requirement, the U.S. Department of Defense has made it a priority to foster the development of cultural competence via education and training curricula within its service arms. The concept of Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) has been developed to reflect the additional requirement that members of the general military population, who tend to deploy to a variety of areas in the world throughout their careers, need a special set of cultural capabilities, which, at the same time, can be efficiently cultivated and transferred across operational environments.

Study Objective: The objective of the current project was to develop a 3C model for the General Purpose Force population in the U.S. military, based on data from operators with experience in various cross-cultural environments, which provides prioritization, organization, and specification. A model, which *prioritizes those cross-cultural competencies that are most important, i.e., core; describes how competencies organize in relation to each other and to mission-critical performance*; and *specifies how the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to cross-cultural competence are enacted in particular/specific ways?*

Method: The study used the complete set of cross-cultural competencies identified in the 2008 DLO RACCA workshop to define a set of hypotheses about the competencies that are critical for effective mission performance across cultural contexts. The study employed an open-ended, incident-based interview methodology, which had the potential to uncover previously unidentified competency areas as well. Using an incident-based data elicitation method also allowed us to ground the model in data reflecting the performance and real, lived experiences of operators as opposed to personal theories and reflections about culture.

Study Sample: A total of 26 officers and senior enlisted from the Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force were interviewed for the study. All warfighters in the sample had been deployed at least twice and 75% had been deployed three or more times to at least two different regions in the world. A conservative estimate of the number of combined years interviewees had spent overseas was about 98 years. All had recent deployments serving in billets that required extensive interaction and contact with members of the native populations, and all had received some form of peer of supervisory nomination indicating that they were especially effective within the role or function they served in and within intercultural interactions in general.

Analysis: The analysis process involved several quantitative and qualitative passes, or sweeps through the data conducted by several members of the research team. As part of a qualitative data sweep, analysts noted emerging themes, distinct categories, and commonalities across the data set. From the interview protocols, analysts also extracted all propositions that described knowledge as well as strategies employed to understand and decide, and used a categorization scheme based on the hypothesized competencies to sort the strategy-related propositions and estimate relative frequencies. Results of these data sweeps were pooled and synthesized into a comprehensive set of themes and categories which were used for model development.

Model: The empirical data and associated analyses provided evidence to suggest 12 critical cross-cultural competencies related to an individual's abilities to maintain a diplomatic stance, reason and interact effectively within variety of intercultural contexts, and to prepare for and

learn from intercultural experiences. Each general competency domain has three associated competencies:

Diplomatic Stance: Three core competencies relate to the individual's ability to adopt a stance or deportment which promotes effective intercultural reasoning, interaction, and learning. The first is the ability to **maintain a mission orientation with regard to intercultural relationships**. This entails having the explicit understanding that intercultural relationships can enable the accomplishment of mission objectives; and further, having the understanding that cultural knowledge can be used to establish strategic intercultural relationships. Second, is **the ability to think about oneself within a cultural context**. This general competency includes the abilities to appreciate that one's own way of viewing the world is unique. Third, is the ability to **manage one's attitudes and reactions towards values and customs that are different from one's own** This includes the ability to transform negative attitudes or reactions into positive ones—or being able to set them aside to accomplish specific objectives.

Cultural Reasoning: Three core competencies relate to the individual's ability to think critically and reason effectively within intercultural situations. The first of these is **the ability to cope with cultural surprises**, the second is the ability to use one's existing cultural knowledge to **develop explanations for behavior,** and third is **perspective taking**, or the ability to see things from the point of view of people who are raised in a different culture. These reasoning processes provide critical foundations for enacting other competencies such as communication and self-presentation, ongoing learning, and attitude management and therefore merit inclusion as a core within a model of 3C.

Intercultural Interaction: Three core competencies relate to the individual's ability to be effective within intercultural interactions—regardless of the specific cultural context. The first is the **ability to be deliberate or planful about the effects they want to achieve on an audience**. Second, the individual must be aware of alternative strategies for achieving communication objectives and have the **ability to be disciplined in their enactment of these strategies**. Third, in order to learn effectively from experiences the individual must have the **ability to continue to reflect on and learn from intercultural interactions and experiences after they occur**.

Cultural Learning: Three core competencies relate to the individual's ability to learn about culture prior to deployment and based on their experiences. First, individuals must be able to maintain practical expectations about how much they need to learn about a culture to **be able to learn about new cultures efficiently**. Second, they must have the **ability to be self-directed both in their approaches to preparing for deployments as well as in their strategies for learning from their experiences.** This means deliberately seeking out experiences and relationships that can advance their cultural understanding. Third, in order to enable the effective development of cross-cultural competence over time, individuals must be **able to identify their own, reliable sources of cultural information**.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the current operating environment, mission success relies increasingly less on military capacity and ever more on the ability to build human relationships. Historically, missions that required 'getting in with the locals' were assigned to specialist, (i.e., Special Forces and personnel in diplomatic occupations such as liaison, foreign area and career civil affairs officers). Today, however, an increasing proportion of the general U.S. military population are placed in positions that require them to support or improve relationships with foreign individuals, organizations, or militaries.

The ability to understand and influence foreign decision makers within the cultural terrain is increasingly recognized as a core warfighter competency. In response to this realization, the U.S. Department of Defense has made it a priority to foster the development of cultural competence via education and training curricula within its service arms. The complication in regard to training and educating the general military population is that they tend to deploy to a variety of areas in the world throughout their careers. Therefore, spending significant time learning the culture and language of a specific region, where they may only deploy once, may not be efficient. Hence, personnel need efficient and effective ways to acquire relevant culture and language capability.

1.1 Cross-Cultural Competence

The concept of Cross-Cultural Competence (3C) has been developed to reflect this requirement. One definition of 3C describes it as:

> The ability to **quickly and accurately comprehend**, then appropriately and effectively engage individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds to achieve the desired effect; **despite not having an in-depth knowledge of the other culture**, and even though fundamental aspects of the other culture may contradict one's own taken-for-granted assumptions/deeply-held belief. (Selmeski, 2007, p. 12).

In addition to acting and engaging effectively within a variety of different cultures, 3C subsumes the abilities to extend or transfer knowledge and skills acquired in one cultural environment to another and to quickly acquire new cultural knowledge and skills. The inclusion of requirements for effective learning and transfer is what fundamentally distinguishes 3C from regional competence or, culture-specific competence. Another fundamental difference is that 3C involves competencies related to intercultural engagement, which transfer wholesale between cultural environments—that is, which do not have to be relearned or re-specified for each deployment (see Figure 1).
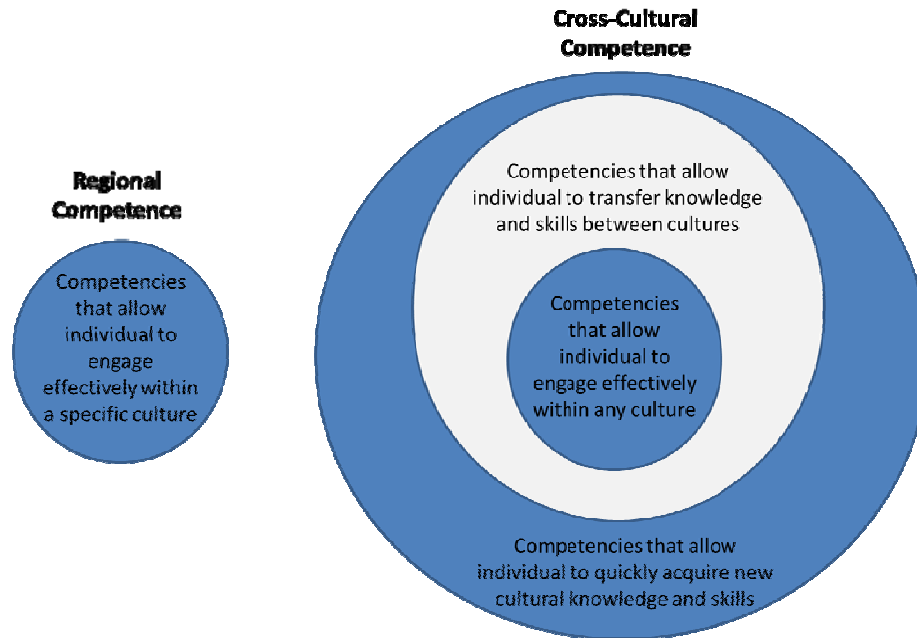
Figure 1. Abstract representation of Regional and Cross-Cultural Competence components.

1.2 Project Objectives

In order to design effective instructional programs that support the development of the broad capabilities stated above one must address two significant challenges. First, the competencies that support culture-general capabilities must be specified at a greater level of detail than is achieved in the above descriptions. To this end, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness (OUSD [P&R]) and the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) have identified an initial list of 3C definitions and learning statements compiled from the Regional and Cultural Capabilities Assessment Working Group (RACCA WG), October 2008 (McDonald, McGuire, Johnston, Selmeski, & Abbe, 2008).

The development of an initial list of 3C definitions and learning statements is a critical first step toward developing a scientifically grounded model of cultural competencies. However, currently, there is currently little empirical evidence available regarding the relationships among the critical knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics proposed to represent cross-cultural competence (3C), and, there is limited evidence connecting these to mission performance. The next step is to develop a model based on data from a military population sample to organize, de-conflict, and prioritize specific competencies, as they are relevant to mission performance.

The goal of the subsequent effort was to develop a model that, in the future, can serve as a foundation for specifying the developmental course of cross-cultural competencies, for outlining assessment strategies, and support the development of learning objectives. Therefore, in order to provide adequate support for such efforts, our study objective was to develop an empirically grounded model of cross-cultural competence, which allows users (policy makers, curriculum and training developers, educators, and supervisors) to answer the following questions:

- *Which competencies are most important, i.e., core?* (Simplification & Prioritization)
- *How do competencies relate to each other and to the context within which they are used?* (Organization)
- *How are knowledge, skills, and abilities related to cross-cultural competence enacted in particular/specific ways?* (Specification)

The objective of the current study was to determine the specific competencies that are characteristic of mission performance and success in military job types that require significant interaction and collaboration with members of foreign cultures. These are job types, which in the current operating environment provide support and stabilization functions, such as advisors, mentors, embedded trainers, etc. The model will focus on cross-cultural competencies, as they are relevant to intercultural interaction and engagement. The goal is a model that applies across the diverse set of jobs that require face-to-face intercultural interaction; and a model applies across the spectrum of military operations, tactical, operational, and strategic. As such, it will not be a model developed for a specific job type, nor will this report make any differential recommendations for specific job types.

1.3 Model Development Approach

The current study based the model development approach on an in-depth cognitive task analysis. For this analysis, critical incidents were collected from an exclusive sample of military operators with 98 years of combined experience operating in foreign environments. In accordance with standard approaches for competence modeling the cognitive task analysis was grounded in a high-level definition of superior performance within the target domain (Boulter, Dalziel, & Hill, 1998). The working definition for the current effort was:

Establishes, maintains, and leverages contacts with members of foreign cultures to enable the efficient and effective accomplishment of mission specific objectives such as establishing civil security, establishing civil control, restoring essential services and social well-being, providing support to governance, and providing support to economic infrastructure development.

1.3.1 Leveraging Past Work

A common approach to identifying competencies within specialized domains is to convene a panel of recognized professionals and through some collective decision making process achieve consensus on the skills and knowledge required for superior performance within the domain. In 2008 the Defense Language Office convened a multidisciplinary working group comprised of cultural researchers and educators for the purpose of identifying the requisite skills and knowledge for cross-cultural competence. Based on their personal and professional experiences as well as familiarity with the research literature the members of the panel identified 40 competencies. These are described in detail along with references to supporting literature in the report documenting the panel's conclusions (McDonald et al., 2008).

In the current effort, these 40 competencies were used as a starting point for developing a set of hypothesized competency areas to investigate further, as well as to validate and extend. In order to elicit detailed information about which competencies were used within these specific intercultural situations and how they are used, a set of deepening questions were developed

based on a review of the DLO report (McDonald et al., 2008). In order to reduce the extensive list of competencies to a set meaningful for data collection, three senior members of the project team reviewed and collaboratively reduced the competencies to a smaller set. Within this reduction, researchers endeavored to eliminate redundancies as well as determine logical and theoretical overlaps. The resulting smaller set of competencies therefore represents a reduction rather than a subset—meaning that the smaller set describes competency areas that the researchers believed represent the full set of competencies (see Table 1).

For example, the Cultural Knowledge competency area subsumes a large number of specific instances of declarative and conceptual knowledge areas that were included in the RACCA list. In the current study, we define cultural knowledge in a broad, open-ended fashion to enable the identification of the exact nature of the type of cultural knowledge that is indeed used in practice.

Table 1. *Mapping Between Cross-Cultural Competency Areas and Behavioral Indicators*

Competency Area	Behavioral Indicator
1. Cultural Sensemaking	1. Manages confusion/surprises
2. Perspective Taking	2. Sees events as another sees them
3. Cultural Knowledge	3. Applies cultural facts / theories
4. Self-Presentation	4. Adapts how express themselves
5. Language Proficiency	5. Displays knowledge of language
6. Emotional Self-Regulation	6. Controls emotional responses
7. Affect/ Attitude	7. Expresses attitude about the culture
8. Withholding/ Suspending Judgment	8. Withholds moral or value judgment
9. Self-Efficacy/Confidence	9. Maintains confidence

In the Data Collection and Analysis sections more details will be provided to describe how the initial 40 competencies were used as a starting point for the current model development effort.

By determining which competencies operators most commonly employ as they prepare for and engage in challenging intercultural interactions researchers were able to reduce the 40 competencies identified by the RACCA working group to a smaller subset and identify those cross-cultural competencies that are critical for mission performance, i.e., core. Similarly, using an open-ended interview process allowed researchers to outline how cross-cultural competencies relate to each other and to the context within which they are used (see Table 2 for overview of mapping between model objectives and scientific methods).

Table 2. *Mapping Between Modeling Objectives and Methodological Approaches*

Model Objectives	Theoretical Issues	Method
Validation **Reduction**	Which, if any, of the cross-cultural competencies that have been identified previously are used by warfighters?	A priori hypothesis testing; quantitative analysis
Hierarchical Organization	Are some used more than others?	
Functional Organization	How are they used? In which contexts are they used?	Exploratory thematic analysis
Extension	Are there additional competencies which have not yet been identified?	

A second objective of this effort was to provide clear descriptions of the specific behaviors or cognitive activities associated with the identified competencies, in order to allow training and assessment efforts to focus on the key underlying behaviors of particular competencies. Three senior members of the research team conducted independent qualitative reviews and analyses of the interview data in order to identify the behaviors and cognitive processes that contribute to performance in different cultural environments and to determine whether the data set indicated the existence of competencies that had not previously been identified.

1.3.2 Expert Study

Why study expert performance? The tasks military professionals engage in that require cross-cultural competence are highly complex. Complex tasks are ones where performance requires use of both controlled (conscious, conceptual) and automated (tacit, procedural, or strategic) knowledge to perform tasks (Phillips, Klein, & Sieck, 2004). The automated, tacit aspects of expertise cannot be captured adequately through reflection (Ericsson, & Simon, 1980). When people draw inferences about their own (or other's) mental processes they are unlikely to consider tacit elements of the skills that underlie performance. Therefore, there is a need to study situations in which experts *demonstrate* the elements of highly skilled performance by pushing the limits of their competence.

For this reason, the core elicitation methodology that was used for this effort was the Critical Decision Method (CDM). The CDM is particularly well-suited for competency modeling because of its focus on elicitation of *demonstrated expertise* through incidents, case accounts, and lived experience. The researchers have successfully adapted and used this approach for use within the inter- and cross-cultural domain in similar past research efforts (Rasmussen, Sieck, Crandall, & Simpkins, 2011; Rasmussen, Sieck, & Osland, 2010; Rasmussen, Grome, Sieck, & Simpkins, 2009; Rasmussen, Grome, Crandall & Sieck, 2009).

As part of an incident-based interviewing approach such as the CDM, people are asked to remember specific situations or incidents in which their skills were used. Because they are not explicitly asked to reflect on or self-assess their performance they are more likely to *reveal* aspects of their expertise that are tacit. The advantage of the incident-based approach is that instead of having the interviewee infer the skills they are using—it is up to the researcher who analyzes the data to make inferences about the skills and knowledge used. Further, because elicited information is specific to a particular decision and incident, the context in which the decision maker is operating remains intact and becomes part of the data record. In the context of cross-cultural expertise, it allows researchers to characterize the cognitive activities that are used within situations that call for cross-cultural competence.

In order to study experts it is necessary to first define what makes one an expert within the current domain, and then develop measurable criteria that allow identification of qualified candidates.

What is a military cross-cultural expert? The concept of expertise in general has received a great deal of attention within the area of cognitive psychology over the last several decades. The most pervasive characteristics of expertise as it has been defined within the traditional cognitive paradigm are (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988):

- *possession of a great deal of conceptual and procedural knowledge that can be accessed quickly*
- *ability to engage in automatic (unconscious) processing of simple aspects of a task so as to free up memory to process more complex aspects*

Although other characteristics and even alternative types of expertise have been identified, the above elements of the classical definition pervade both the scientific literature and our commonsense understanding of what it means to be an expert. These characteristics, however, fail to capture the capabilities or competencies that allow some experts to creatively and adaptively deal with new problems—adapting routine strategies, and sometimes even generating new strategies (Hatano, & Inagaki, 1983).

The notion of *adaptive expertise* suggested by Hatano, et al. (1983) is particularly relevant towards defining expertise in the context of cross-cultural performance. As stated earlier, cross-cultural competence is "*the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively engage individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds to achieve the desired effect; **despite not having an in-depth knowledge of the other culture**"* (Selmeski, 2007, p12). This definition acknowledges that the facts, rules, and routines that apply in one culture do not necessarily apply in another, in which sense each new culture is a problem to be solved.

As such, cross-cultural expertise inherently requires adaptation and thus more than accumulated knowledge of a number of specific cultures or regions. In other words, what defines the cross-cultural expert is not what they know about specific cultures, but rather that they are able to adapt to and become proficient in new cultures.

Finally for the purpose of defining and scoping expertise as it relates to the current performance domain, it is important to note that this project is particularly concerned with cross-cultural competence within the *military*. This is an important caveat to keep in mind as a defining characteristic of expert knowledge is that it is procedural in nature and therefore tied to the contexts in which it is used (Glaser, 1983). That is, expert knowledge is *actionable*. This is why it is necessary to study cross-cultural expertise specifically as it applies within the military domain rather than draw inferences about competencies based on lessons learned from other domains such as such as anthropology, international business, global leadership, or international student exchange.

How do we identify military cross-cultural experts? In some domains there are so-called "gold standards" for what it means to be an expert in the form of documentation that comprehensively describes the knowledge one must have and the standards and procedures that must be followed (Hoffman, 1996). This is far from always the case, however. Often these criteria are not exhaustively defined, and the objective of an expert study may be to establish what the elements of expertise within a domain are in the first place, as is the case in the current effort.

One might be tempted to argue that since cross-cultural competence in a sense enables the development of regional or culture-specific proficiency, one could determine cross-cultural expertise merely by assessing the extent of a person's culture specific knowledge. This might be possible provided a criterion existed for the number of cultures one should be familiar with and

for the depth and extent of culture-specific knowledge required. However, even though the region-specific knowledge requirements have been identified for specialist populations within the military, the requirements for general purpose forces have not. Given that specialists spend most of their careers in a single area and generalists are assigned to a variety of areas across their careers it very likely that the requirements for these populations are not the same. It is even possible that they hardly overlap.

In cases where expertise cannot be objectively determined relative to a pre-defined standard, it is accepted practice to identify expert candidates on the basis of professional licensing, or subjective questionnaires about a person's experience (Hoffman, 1996). For the current study a set of criteria was developed which were designed to ensure the recruitment of highly qualified candidates.

First, candidate participants must have had the opportunity to develop an understanding of and to engage with individuals from other cultures that they did not already have an in-depth knowledge of. For the current study, exposure was indicated by number of deployments and the types of assignments an individual had on these deployments. Second, candidates must have been successful in developing understanding and in engaging individuals in these foreign cultures. Success was subjectively indicated by peers or superiors. A more detailed description of the sampling criteria as well as the specific qualifications of the individuals included in the study sample is provided in the Methods section.

2.0 METHOD

2.1 Participants

2.1.1 Sampling Criteria

The criteria for inclusion in the study was at least two tours of duty overseas to different regions, serving in roles that required extensive interaction with local populaces, civilians and/or partnered forces, and a form of superior/peer-nomination testifying to the individual's effectiveness in the high-contact assignment. Recruitment was limited to members of the general purpose force who had received only minimal formal language and culture training, but who had had the opportunity to develop cross-cultural knowledge and skills informally by having repeatedly served in high-contact support and stabilization assignments overseas, such as advisors, mentors, embedded trainers, etc.

We strove to engage only individuals who had served overseas recently—that is, within the last two years. This could therefore also include individuals who had either retired recently or, who had retired from military service some time back but who have transitioned to civilian positions in the DOD and DOS that required continued application of their language and cross-cultural skills. Peer nomination was designed to occur naturally as an outcome of using the respondent-driven recruitment approach described below.

2.1.2 Recruitment

Engaging personnel who met the inclusion criteria and who were willing to participate presented an obvious challenge. The researchers relied on a recruitment strategy that drew on both organizational and individual contacts into key military operational communities. That strategy is described in more detail in the following.

Approaching military culture and language centers along with military education facilities was a useful approach for locating qualified individuals. For the current study, sampling was supplemented using this strategy. We primarily relied on established contacts at the Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL) and the Army's Command General Staff College.

Because the targeted participants are rare, however, when an organizational official, commanding officer or instructor was contacted within these organizations, they were often able to nominate only a very small set of individuals who met the criteria, often only one or two. Therefore, the organizational contacts were supplemented with contacts to individuals within the personal networks of the primary researchers as well as LtCol (ret.) David Rababy, who served as a consultant on the project. Further, the researchers used a respondent-driven sampling technique in which existing study participants recommended future participants from among their acquaintances and peers.

As part of the procedure for recruiting, no one was asked to provide third party contact information for their colleagues or acquaintances up front. They were instead asked if they were willing to reach out to qualified individuals on the researchers' behalf to assess their interest. They were then provided with written information about the study that they could share with candidate participants. Once candidate participants had indicated interest in participating, a member of the research team would contact them either via phone or email. Regardless of whether these contacts themselves were willing and able to participate they were asked if they knew anyone else who met the sampling criteria who might participate. This recruitment approach is sometimes referred to as snowball sampling. As more relationships are built, more connections can be made through those new relationships.

2.1.3 Study Sample

Twenty-six individuals were interviewed; however, 6 interviewees were excluded from the final sample for the following reasons:

- 1 had only been deployed once (to Afghanistan)
- 1 had dated experience (more than 10 years since last deployment/overseas experience)
- 1 only completed half the interview (1 hr.) and we were not able to reconnect
- 1 was a special forces operator with a very different mission than rest of the sample
- 1 had grown up in the Middle East and had only been deployed to the ME
- 1 was now a cultural trainer and mostly spoke about how culture should be trained

The final sample consisted of 20 warfighters from the Marine Corps (10), Army (8), and Air Force (2). All warfighters in the sample had deployed at least twice and 75% had been deployed

three or more times, to different regions (see Appendix I for full overview of interviewee qualifications). All had recent assignments that had required extensive interaction and contact with members of the native populations. A conservative estimate of the number of combined years interviewees had spent overseas was about 98 years. Further, all had received some form of peer of supervisory nomination indicating that they were especially effective within the role or function they served in and within intercultural interactions in general.

All interviewees were members of the General Purpose Force population—that is, none had primary Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) that provided them with specialized training and education in aspects of diplomacy or specialized regional competence (such as Special Forces, liaison officers, or career civil affairs). Instead, they had primarily served in billets related to mentoring, advising, provincial reconstruction, embedded training, and civil affairs (non-career). Six of the interviewees did serve in human intelligence gathering roles on some of their deployments, but, except for the General (Interview #1), none had received culture training prior to their deployments that involved more than a country-brief including a high-level overview of local customs and basic words and phrases prior to those specific deployments.

Only three interviewees spoke second languages that were relevant and useful for some of their deployments (#1, #5, and #16). These interviewees, however, also had experiences deploying to regions where they were not fluent in the local languages.

2.2 Procedure

The interviews were semi-structured, following a Critical Decision, incident-based Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) method that relies on recollection of tough cases and challenging events (Crandall, Klein, & Hoffman, 2006). As seen in Figure 2, the starting point for the interviews were critical incidents in which the interviewees personally experienced (inter)cultural challenges focusing on their most recent deployment experiences. The interviewees' own examples of recent challenging interactions were used as a point of departure for eliciting detailed information about which competencies were used within specific intercultural situations, how they were used, what and how they had learned *across* their deployment experiences, as well as their strategies for adapting to new cultures. The highlights of the overview guide and process are described below; see Appendix II for the full interview guide.

1. **Manages** confusion/surprises
2. **Sees** events as another sees them
3. **Applies** cultural facts / theories
4. **Adapts** how express themselves
5. **Displays** knowledge of language
6. **Controls** emotional responses
7. **Expresses** attitude about the culture
8. **Withholds** moral or value judgment
9. **Maintains** confidence
10. Other

Listen for

Critical intercultural experience during most recent deployment

Transfer from past experiences & training

Self-directed learning practices

Background

Critical Incident   Deepening   What-If   Preparation

Introduction

2hrs +

Figure 2. Overview of interview process.

2.2.1 Interview Guide

Eliciting Critical Incidents: The Opening Question. The kinds of incidents that were of interest were ones in which the interviewee played a critical role. That is, they were not mere observers to an intercultural interaction between other actors—they took an active part in the interaction, and perhaps even played a critical role in shaping the outcome of the interaction.

Although researchers were looking for interactions that were 'cultural' in nature—that is ones in which cultural differences played a critical role or presented an obstacle, the word 'culture' was not used in the opening question. We all think we know what 'culture' is; and, we all have very different notions about what it is. The first, very important methodological decision made, was **not to talk about culture in the interviews.** At least, a key objective was to not make culture the starting point for the interviews. This critically distinguishes the current study from other research in this area. Rather than eliciting interviewee's personal theories and constructs about culture (and cultural competence), the current study sought to elicit their lived cultural experiences.

Therefore, instead of making 'culture' the starting point for the interviews, they more generally focused on the human challenges inherent in operating in foreign environments. The interviewer(s) would provide a description of the kind of incident that would be interesting to talk about and then ask the interviewee to think of two or three experiences they thought might be relevant. As the interviewees provided a high-level overview of these experiences, the interviewers would listen for critical incidents in which the challenge appeared to be related to culture. The interviewers would then select one incident for deepening.

Can you tell me about a time, during your most recent deployment, when you interacted with members of the local populace (civilians, tribal leaders, local officials, partnered forces, etc.), coalition partners, or third country nationals and <u>found the interaction particularly challenging</u>?

Characterizing Expertise—Successes vs. Challenges. One strategy for eliciting knowledge and skills related to expertise is to ask interviewees to describe challenging experiences in which they were successful. That is, situations in which they applied their skills and knowledge to solve a problem or make a decision that resulted in a successful outcome.

Can you think of a time when your experience and expertise was really important in helping you make an accurate assessment of someone from another culture and that assessment was critical to your mission?

Can you think of a time when you were in the midst of X (where X is one of the job tasks identified by the participants earlier in the interview that has a strong cultural component) and your skill really made a difference—maybe things would have gone much worse if you hadn't been there? (Ross, 2008)

In the current study, interviewers were not looking for 'successful' interactions. That is, they did not explicitly ask participants to talk about experiences where they 'performed well.' Instead, they were asked about incidents where they were challenged—where their knowledge, skills and self-management abilities were really put to the test.

How Competencies are Used: Deepening Questions. A set of deepening probes were constructed which specifically allowed interviewers to obtain detailed information around specific competency areas if, and when, these came up in the context of the interviewee's experience. These deepening probes were clustered around a set of specific behavioral indicators which represented each of these broad competency areas to listen for and deepen on.

By structuring the data collection around an initial set of hypothesized competencies we were able to use the competencies outlined by previous research efforts as an initial starting point. However, the open-ended nature of the interviews allowed exploration of competency areas which have not previously been documented, which was important since this was the first study to systematically sample individuals with high levels of cross-cultural expertise from the military community.

2.2.2 Interview Process

Each interview would begin with a short description of the purpose of the interview as well as an overview of the interviewee's rights. The primary interviewer ensured the interviewee that the interview was voluntary, the interviewee could choose to end it at any time, and they could refuse to answer any specific questions at any time. Interviewees were also informed of the confidential and unclassified nature of the interviews.

With the interviewee's consent to participate and permission to audio record the interview; interviewers would proceed to obtain a description of the interviewee's background and history with the military. In accordance with the Critical Decision Method (CDM) procedure,

interviewers then asked for an initial account of the incident, and then made several additional passes through the incident account to elicit specific, detailed descriptions of the event, the natives' behaviors, and the interviewee's judgments, decisions, perceptions, and assessments over the course of the event. The interviews followed a semi-structured approach, employing pre-determined cross-cultural competency related probes to elicit detailed information about the way in which the application of specific competencies allowed them to manage the interactions that occurred during the incident.

As the interviewee described the challenging components of the incident and their decisions/actions, interviewers would listen for behavioral indicators that mapped to the nine competency areas. Interviewers then listened for the competency areas that appeared critical to supporting performance within each specific context described and would use the competency area-specific deepening probes to elicit more detailed information around these (see Appendix II for full Interview Guide). Interviewers would ask deepening questions for as many competency areas as there was time for during the interview.

Finally, when time permitted, interviewers ended the interview with discussion around training issues, including the nature of the cultural training they had received.

Except for two interviews, all were two hours long. One interview was three hours long. One interviewee spent an entire day with us and was interviewed in two segments of 2.5 hours and 3.5 hours, with a break for lunch in the middle.

The intent was to conduct the interviews in person when logistically possible. Given the nature of the sampling criteria for this study, however, it presented a challenge to locate geographically concentrated clusters of individuals who met our selection criteria—making travel to each interviewee's location unfeasible; therefore, a large portion were telephone interviews. Six interviews were in person, and 14 were over the telephone. There was no significant difference in the quality of data obtained in person compared to over the telephone.

The interviews were transcribed and loaded into a software program that allowed us organize, analyze, and manage this very large dataset. The resulting interview transcripts were between 21 and 53 pages long, with an average length of 27 pages. Each transcript contained between 12,500 and 30,000 words, with an average of approximately 17,000 words.

2.3 Data Analysis

2.3.1 Qualitative Analysis

Three senior researchers conducted several systematic qualitative passes through the interview transcripts to develop and refine themes and categories. As part of a first data pass, the three analysts each independently reviewed large selections of the transcripts, noting emerging themes, distinct categories, and commonalities across the data set. Results of this initial pass through the data were pooled and synthesized into a comprehensive set of themes and categories for use in subsequent analysis sweeps. One objective of this pass was to identify new competencies, not previously identified, and therefore, not included in the set of 9 hypothesized competencies. The result was a final set of themes and categories derived through iterative analysis, which served as the framework for quantitative coding of the data.

Subsequent to the quantitative coding of the data, the three analysts also reviewed a large selection of key excerpts from the data representing each of the nine competency areas. Members of the analysis team worked independently for each pass through the data but met frequently throughout to perform comparative examinations and identify commonalities, gaps, and discrepancies. The objective of these independent reviews were to characterize patterns in how the competencies were used and to describe how competencies were employed *together* to support mission performance/meet mission objectives in the context of specific interactions, or critical incidents. Examples of critical incidents are provided in Appendix III.

2.3.2 Coding Scheme for Quantitative Analysis

The coding scheme explicitly framed the nine competency areas, *cultural sensemaking, perspective taking, cultural knowledge, self-presentation, language proficiency, emotional self-regulation, attitude about culture, withholding judgment, and self-efficacy* in terms of specific activities or behaviors that coders could easily discern within the interviewees' descriptions of their experiences (see Appendix IV for full details of the coding scheme.)

In addition to identifying the key competency areas reflected in the interviewees' experiences, another objective was to characterize the context in which competencies were used. Three levels of context were identified: Pre-deployment, within mission-critical interactions, and outside mission-critical interactions (each level will be described in more detail in section 3.3 describing results of the analysis of context).

Lastly, we instituted four coding categories that would allow us to systematically examine other areas of potential interest or importance within the dataset. These categories were intended to tag references to instances of generalization or transfer across cultures, metacognition, mission success, or other. The last category, *Other*, was a catch-all for anything that coders noted as relevant to cross-cultural competencies but did not fit in either of the pre-defined categories.

2.3.3 Coding Process for Quantitative Analysis

The interview transcripts were divided among four analysts who had significant experience analyzing and coding interview data. From the interview transcripts, analysts extracted all the propositions that contained applications of cultural knowledge, skills, or attitudes, along with explanations provided for why interviewees handled situations a certain way. Analysts also extracted propositions that appeared to relate to generalization and ones that made explicit references to mission objectives and/or mission success. Going forward, these extracted propositions will be referred to as excerpts. Coders were to assign as many primary competency codes to each excerpt as applicable; i.e. they were not restricted to one competency code per excerpt. Further, they were to assign the 'Other' code to excerpts that contained knowledge, skill, or attitude related information not captured by the nine primary competency areas. For each excerpt, coders also noted the context, i.e., the extent to which the activities described occurred prior to deployment, within mission-critical interactions, or outside mission-critical interactions, as well as the extent to which the excerpt described experience or reflection.

The four coders were provided with the overview of the coding scheme and asked to provide feedback concerning the coding categories. Following, is a description of the schedule used in

the coding process. First, the coders applied the scheme to the first half of an interview. The coders then met to compare their coding results, identify points of confusion or disagreement and discuss. The purpose of this meeting was to refine the definitions of existing categories. The coders discussed their individual rationales for code choices for excerpts where they were uncertain and came to a consensus. The principal investigator checked rules/codes lacking coder consensus and then refined the rules. The four coders divided the remaining interviews and independently coded them using the updated coding scheme.

3.0 RESULTS

In the following, we describe the results of the overall frequency analysis examining the prevalence of the nine hypothesized competency areas. For each competency area, we provide qualitative descriptions in order to capture the most prominent cognitive and behavioral characteristics and indicators of each. Following the results of the overall frequency analysis, we present results relevant to the portion of the interviews that directly address the relationship between cross-cultural competencies and mission success. Next, we describe how the overall findings relate to the different types of context as well as differences that we noted between the interviewees in our sample. Finally, we will describe two additional competency areas which emerged from the qualitative analysis, which appeared to be critically linked to successful performance.

3.1 Overall Results

We performed a frequency analysis in order to examine the prevalence of the nine hypothesized competency areas. We calculated frequencies and percentages for each competency code, and we performed Pearson's chi-square tests on the superordinate competency categories to determine if the observed frequencies conformed to a uniform distribution. In the following, we describe results of the frequency analysis.

Half of the interviews excerpts were coded twice by two separate coders for the purposes of calculating inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by coding each code application as an agreement (1) or disagreement (0) and calculating the mean. The mean represents the proportion of applications that both coders agreed upon. The overall reliability was .81 (Cohen's Kappa). Kappa values exceeding .81 indicate very good agreement (see Cicchetti, 1994).

Overall, the cross-cultural competency codes were not assigned with the same frequency X^2 (8, N = 1324) = 709.85, $p < .001$. Cultural sensemaking, perspective taking, cultural knowledge, and self-presentation were assigned significantly more often than the remaining five competency areas (see Figure 3) and co-occurred significantly more often as well (see Appendix V).
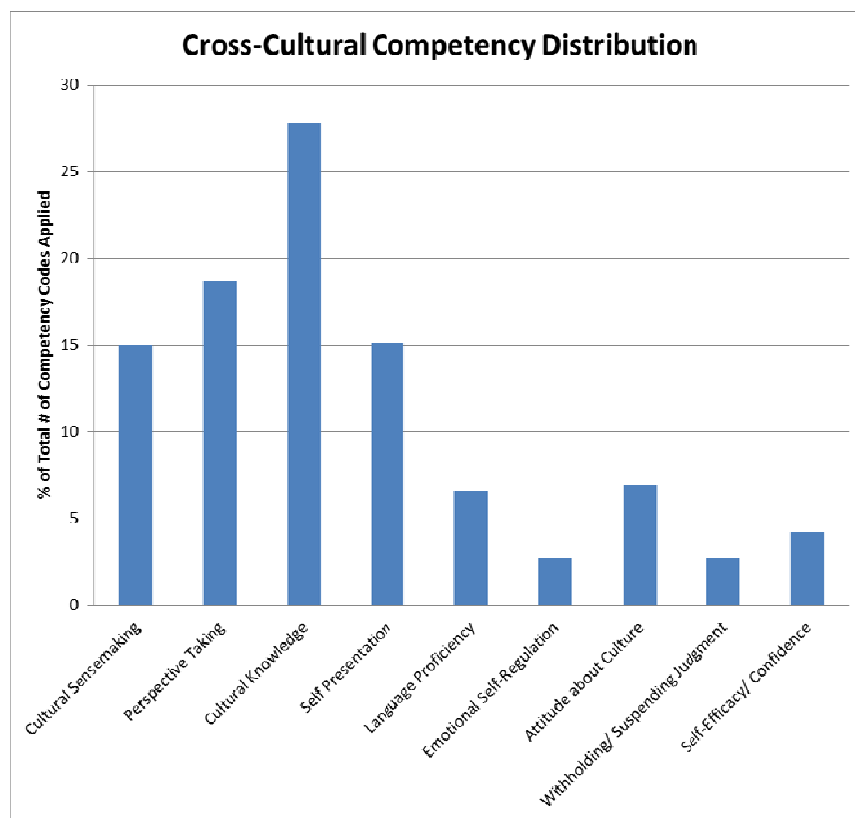
Figure 3. Frequency of cross-cultural competency code application (as a function of total number of competency codes applied, in %).

Examining the distribution of competency code applications across interviewees illustrates that this pattern of results is consistent across members (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Primary Cross-Cultural Competency Code Assignments Across Interviewees*

#	Interviewee	Seeing events as others see them	Resolving confusions/ surprises	Adapt how you express	Cultural Facts & Theories	Control of emotional response	Witholding moral judgment	Knowledge of Language	Attitude about Culture	Self-Efficacy	Total
1	Gen (MC)	17	11	13	35	1	1	5	7	10	100
2	Col (MC)	11	8	6	5	1	5	1	15	2	54
3	Col (MC)	8	8	10	25	5	3	1	5	2	67
4	LTC (MC)	26	13	24	32	4	2	3		5	109
5	LTC (MC)	14	17	14	24	1	1	7	2	2	82
6	LTC (AR)	11	13	7	23			1	4	7	2	68
7	Maj (AR)	7	1	4	12	1		1	1		27
8	Maj (MC)	5	6	3	7					1	22
9	Maj (MC)	17	2	5	18	1		6	3	4	56
10	Maj (AF)	10	18	2	17		2	4	1		54
11	Maj AR)	9	5	9	12	1	3	2	5	2	48
12	Maj (AR)	12	7	4	12	2		5	6	2	50
13	Maj (AR)	18	8	22	22	6	7	11	5	1	100
14	Cap (MC)	8	10	10	21	3		8	6	4	70
15	Cap (AR)	11	22	5	29	6	5	5	15	4	102
16	Cap (AF)	9	17	2	22		1	7	7	6	71
17	MSGT (AR)	10	22	14	19	3	4	14		7	93
18	MSGT (MC)	21	5	14	20				2	1	63
19	SFC (AR)	12	1	18	8	1		1	5		46
20	SSGT (AR)	12	5	13	7		1	3		1	42
	Total	248	199	199	370	36	36	88	92	56	1324

In the following sections, we describe *what the experts are doing* when they were using or applying specific cross-cultural competencies. The objective of this characterization is to identify the range of *specific behaviors and cognitive activities* that are associated with each of these competency areas. First, we describe the data as it relates to the four competency areas that were identified in the quantitative analysis as occurring most frequently overall (namely, Cultural Sensemaking, Perspective Taking, Cultural Knowledge, and Self-Presentation.) Then, we describe the nature of the behaviors we observed in the data associated with Language Proficiency, Emotional Self-Regulation, Affect/Attitude, Withholding/Suspending Judgment, and Self-Efficacy/Confidence.

3.1.1 Cultural Sensemaking

Cultural sensemaking encompasses a set of cognitive processes that allow individuals to improve their cultural understanding. These processes include noticing unexpected or surprising cultural behaviors or events, asking questions or seeking information in order to make sense of a surprise, generating hypothesized explanations for surprising cultural behaviors, challenging one's own assumptions, or changing one's cultural understanding (Sieck, Smith, & Rasmussen, 2008). A total of 199 instances, or 15% of cognitive activities or behaviors that were observed in the data were related to cultural sensemaking processes. The prevalence of these types of cognitive activities or behaviors indicates that cultural sensemaking processes are critical to ongoing improvement of cultural understanding. Further, they suggest that cultural sensemaking is a key component of cultural learning, which we discuss in more detail later.

Noticing Surprises. The interviewees in our sample were alert to and noticed discrepancies and puzzling phenomena in their environments. They also frequently inquired into their causes. The following quotes represent a few of the types of surprises that the interviewees described.

> *But then we had a bunch of boys start following us and they actually really became aggressive, **they started throwing rocks**. So we ran for the MRAP and got into the back of the MRAP, everybody else, and all the rest of the soldiers were still up at the other building so it was just this other soldier and I and we just kept opening up the door and every time we did they'd throw more rocks at us. We just couldn't figure it out, why… everything was going so well.* (Army SFC)

> *That was another thing that surprised me. In all the cultural classes there's a big like, "how's your family?" You don't get to business right away, this isn't America, in America you get right down to business, and here you have to soften them up. It was quite the opposite; I mean **it couldn't be more wrong. They treated you like a business partner** and, eventually, would treat you like a friend. So before, when they didn't know you, like this guy didn't know me, it was very much "here's what I want to talk to you about." I mean that's it, it came right up front. Now, eventually, when you gained a relationship with these people, THEN they'll say, "how are things? Do you have a wife?* (Marine Corps Major)

> *One of the ones that surprised me more than anything else was **the Afghan ability to…I won't say forgive, maybe that's not the right word, but to understand and***

> ***deal with enemies***, *former enemies, who are now working in the same office.*
> (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

The finding that the interviewees regularly paid attention to and noticed unexpected behaviors and events indicates that they are attuned to cultural differences in their environments. Further, noticing that one is surprised is the first step towards recognizing experiences as opportunities to improve cultural understanding.

Asking Questions. In many cases, when the interviewees encountered unexpected situations, the experience of surprise appeared to motivate them to seek information to create better understanding. Their goal was to 'make sense' of the situation by modifying their initial understanding that led to the surprise, or replace it with a better one. In the following, we provide examples of the types of questions interviewees would pose.

Consider this experience described to us by a Marine Corps Colonel.

> *What really struck me, I think, looking back on it now, I guess it's just **the lack of ability to communicate time, how do I communicate time** – days, years – if it's beyond just a few days, something that happened last week and its' really out there? I think that's what they were having trouble communicating a lengthy length of time beyond just maybe a month. Something that happened maybe a year ago, **I don't think they really have a good way to know how long ago that was**. And that was the take away that I had. So, getting a clear sense of how long ago something happened, in relation to time, was difficult and it took a while to kind of understand and communicate the time aspect. What I would have thought would have been like last week, actually was an event that maybe happened two years ago. It dawned on me; **maybe they don't have the same concept of time**… And, it really dawned on me that because of this I was frustrated in my ability to understand the whole intimidation factor of this village…*

Some questions focused on very specific phenomena or localized experiences of difference such as the example above. Others were of a more general nature and were a result of a reaction to broader experiences of difference, such as the example below.

> *Understanding where they were coming from, it was all about their livelihood, **what do they think about a community? What do they think about the government? What their lives like?** And the more I delved into those types of things and the more I dove into trying to connect them with each other, as women, to find out the community's needs, then they found that I was sincere.* (Marine Corps MSgt)

Generating Hypotheses/Explanations of Behavior. As another critical component of cultural sensemaking, the interviewees in our sample continually developed explanations for the behaviors and events they observed within other cultures. These explanations would represent their guesses about the dynamics of social interaction within the culture, or their intuitive theories of behavior and psychology.

See, for example, this Army Major's explanation for the poor outcome of a meeting with district officials in Afghanistan in one of her early deployments.

> *At that time I remember flying back with another major and the general and we were talking about it – what was our expectations and then what happened? And then we kind of… as I remember… kind of chalked it up to initial ice breakers,* **initial conversation is really difficult**, *maybe we reduced our topics to not so many, and we bring to the table only the important topics and concerns that we really wanted to have real conversations about instead of… we didn't have a ton of slides but the reduction of 1-2 slides and some major key issues, so that it wasn't overwhelming.* (Army Major)

Or, an Army SFC's explanation for why Afghan women were guarded about providing information in interviews.

> *There were times when it was very obvious, to me and to the interpreter who was with us, that what women were saying was not how they felt but they were saying it* **because there was a man around**. *Because once we got a female interpreter, we started hearing different things than we did when we had a male interpreter.* (Army SFC)

An Air Force Major's explanation of Afghan commander who was, on the one hand treating one of his men harshly and on the other, was taking advantage of resources placed under his control.

> *My hypothesis at the time was probably that* **this guy was a threat to his authority in the unit and so he was going to just remove this guy and set an example**. *Unfortunately, not the example that we were hoping for but for those who kind of countermanded his will, and went against his will, they were going to be dealt with harshly, I guess, is one way to put it. Yes, that he was making an example of this guy to make sure that, or set an example for the others that, "here's what's going to happen if you don't do what I tell you.* (Air Force Major)

> *It gives him creature comforts for one thing, money in some cases, which I mean the country, I think especially by our standards, is fairly destitute, that even a person in his position earns in terms of someone in this country, I guess* **there's an economic incentive for him to use those resources for his personal gain**. *But I think* **just having the power**, *in general, and letting perhaps his peers know that "I'm controlling these resources, if you want something, then you have to deal with me." I think there was some of that involved in his relationships with other peers on the base that I was at. And I think* **it does bring him some power and prestige to managing things that way.** (Air Force Major)

Challenging Assumptions/Testing Hypotheses. There were several examples in the data of interviewees, when facing a surprise, explicitly identifying assumptions they might be making which could have led to the surprise. Alternatively, they would generate an initial explanation for the event or behavior which could then be tested. Following, we describe examples in which the interviewees took such a scientific approach to testing and increasing their understanding.

We observed at least three different ways of going about testing assumptions or initial explanations. One involved seeking feedback by trying different strategies—the other involved formulating questions and directly asking or looking for information—and the last involved attempting to see the event or behavior from the other person's point of view. In either case, interviewees started out with guesses about what might be going on in the initially puzzling or surprising situation. This account from a Marine Corps LtCol provides a good example of how he used both strategies in Iraq to test a hypothesis about a cultural rule that he had learned in training.

> *I remember going through training, they'd tell us 'if they see the bottom of your feet, that's automatically an offense.' I thought, 'well okay, that's pretty extreme…' So, I asked my interpreter: I always was told if you show the bottom of your feet it's an egregious sin. He goes, 'it depends, if your legs are tight and all that. They know that you don't mean to be disrespectful, but just don't automatically show the bottom of your feet, if you're sitting down cross-legged.' So, I would make an effort out of it when I sat cross-legged, I would apologize, and the people would say, 'no, we know, you Americans are…we don't take this as an offense.' So,* **I inquired and I tested it out** *and sure enough, no big problem.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

Another Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel's experience in Somalia provides a great example of seeking information more directly. In this instance, the Lieutenant Colonel leverages cultural mentors to test a hypothesis that he generates after experiencing a surprise. The LtCol had been surprised to see men with red hair and beards among members of local crowds, in a country where the population generally has black or brown hair. He developed a hypothesis, or possible explanation, and vetted it with his interpreter. We discuss the idea of using "cultural mentors" as ongoing sources of information about culture more in the learning section.

> *In Somalia, if you see a man in the crowd with a red beard, and it's usually just a small little goatee-type of beard, or his hair dyed red as well, then that tells you he is the leader or the tribal elder. I actually learned it when I got into country. And the way I learned about it is there would be a crowd, and people would be talking to me, but* **instead of answering me, they would look towards the man with the red beard**. *So I just kind of put two-and-two together to figure out this is the guy in charge because everybody keeps looking to him for answers. I confirmed it with my interpreter. I said, "Why is his beard red? I mean obviously there are no redheads over here. Is this man a leader?* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

A different Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel described his practices for challenging and testing some his assumptions about a culture before he would even deploy.

> *One of the first things I'll do is just cruise the internet and see what's out there. There's usually ex-pat sites, there's always Wikipedia, and I start balancing these things and seeing what the commonalties are and* **the things that I hold true**. *And it may say one thing for instance, on Wikipedia, okay, that sounds real, but what are the sources? Where did that source come from? I look at the footnotes and I'll*

start following the links back and that honestly starts leading me into places that are more fruitful and more truthful. And then just asking people who know about it, or people that I run into about it, or folks who are out there on the web holding themselves out as experts. I found most of them are amazingly approachable and love to talk about it. (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

Changing Understanding. As many of the previous examples illustrate, the sensemaking strategies of asking questions, generating explanations, and challenging assumptions often lead to overt changes in understanding. These changes in understanding are important illustrations of the kinds of cultural knowledge and cultural understanding that cross-culturally experienced service members develop from their interactions. Next, we provide a couple of additional excerpts from the interviews that illustrate changes in understanding.

The first interviewee describes a very general change in understanding that an Air Force Major experienced in Afghanistan, when he realized that 1) Afghans are not all the same, and 2) Afghans and Americans do share many fundamental values.

> *And frankly, I can't speak for the other guys on my team but my perceptions of what the people were going to be like that we were dealing with, some of them were confirmed, but a lot of them, I think, were wrong, that in terms of what their opinion of the West was. And granted, there are, like I said, people from the country, it's like going back in time 200 years, and their perception of the world is a little bit skewed. But then there are people like these guys who use the internet, talk on their cell phones, are aware of world events, share values, and a sense of right and wrong that we do. So **I guess I was a little bit surprised in some cases about how similar we were**.* (Air Force Major)

Another excerpt provided by a female MSgt illustrates how a mismatch between her expectations about what it would be like to be a female in Iraq and her actual experiences resulted in a change in her understanding.

> *Actually it's probably one of the most important things that I can share with you is the gender and how we were perceived. **What I was told was wrong, and even my preconceived notions of what I thought I was supposed to do, and who I was in Iraq**, I was very short-sighted. I had no idea the impact that a female would have in an area such as this. And I mean 'impact' being on multiple levels, we were seen as a benevolent presence, they saw us as this third gender.* (Marine Corps MSgt)

The final example describes a more complex, conceptual change in understanding experienced by an Air Force Captain in his efforts to understand the Afghan warrior culture. He noticed that the Afghan notion of warrior seemed counterintuitive to the American notion of what it means to be a warrior. He also noticed that Afghans tend to communicate using parables and used that as an entry point to researching and understanding the Afghan notion of warrior.

> *We say, are you wearing a suit? Do you go get dressed in the booth to come out that super hero warrior?… They know how to manipulate, they know how to*

*survive, and they know how to come together when they need to come together, even if it's in the middle of the night, and they'll continue to do that. And that's just sort of how things are done, and because we don't realize that, because we have this expectation of this warrior culture, and we have that painted image in our mind… And so having spoken to this guy who was very proud that…and he looked like he was 80, might have been 60, but very proud of the fact that he was a Mujahidin when the Russians came and that he sort of was part of this little elite bandit unit that when people needed help he would go. And then also discussing the fact that no one knew that, to everybody else he was just a poor, helpless Afghan who was here to serve, and by another master, but sort of during the day. But, at night, totally different story, he put on the super hero outfit and everybody knew, in the village, that he was part of this unit, and he would go off and do these things. But, during the day, you couldn't pay anybody to tell them that. **And people speak in parables all the time like that. And I'm like, "what does that mean?"** I think the Afghan fables, I don't know if you've ever read those, and even jokes, and I wish I could remember the jokes but the jokes, and even the fables, all describe the Afghan as being successful by outsmarting the enemy by playing dumb… The jokes they tell about one tribe vs. the other, the fables that exist about how someone managed to get away by making themselves appear dumb.* (Air Force Captain)

3.1.2 Perspective Taking

Perspective taking is a cognitive process that allows individuals to think about the world from another person's point of view. As part of our coding, we tagged all instances where interviewees described considering the point of view of others, that is, they referenced the internal/psychological states of others, such as their thoughts, knowledge, feelings, intentions, or values.

There were 248 instances of perspective taking identified across the interviews, equaling a 18.7% of all competency codes applied. Examining the nature of the perspective taking activities that interviewees engaged in, we found that perspective taking was frequently used in the context of two other hypothesized competencies, mainly cultural sensemaking and self-presentation. That is, often perspective taking was used in the context of efforts to develop a deeper understanding within situations that were initially experienced as surprising or confusing and to manage some aspect of self-presentation. Additionally, perspective taking was used in the context of relationship building to assess the trustworthiness of native members of a culture and to manage expectations with regard to one's own objectives within interactions and collaborations. A later section describing competencies related to developing human relationships to achieve mission-related objectives will discuss the latter applications of perspective taking.

Developing Deeper Understanding. The following excerpt provides a good example of using perspective taking to make sense of a behavior initially perceived as surprising. The SFC in this case was puzzled that an Iraqi official who appeared very Westernized, and very open to Western influence, still insisted on pre-arranging his daughter's marriage.

Yes, and I have to admit, yes, I did wonder about it, I still wonder about that. From somebody who dressed in western clothes and had a lot to do with the U.S. Army that was there, and government officials and things like that, it seemed to me to be almost a contradiction. You want to be westernized for yourself but maybe not so much for your daughter. But, again, that's who he was so who am I to say whether that's right or wrong for him or for her? I mean I can have my own opinions but it is what it is... **One way to make sense of it all is if he was doing this liaising with the U.S. government, the military, and making relationships there because he saw that as the way to get ahead in Iraq, and the way to better his country, or maybe the way to get to the point where the Americans would leave.** *And then get back to being in that more... I mean it doesn't mean that he left his traditional beliefs behind,* **he was doing, maybe, what he thought as what he had to do to either a) get rid of the Americans, or better himself, or better his town, or his province, or his country**, *that kind of thing...* (Army SFC)

Managing self-presentation. Frequently, perspective taking was used to figure out the best ways to present oneself, or to present information in order to achieve desired effects.

The following account provides a good illustration of using perspective taking to figure out the best way to present oneself. This account describes the first meeting between a Marine Corps LtCol and an Afghan battalion commander whom he will be mentoring for the duration of his tour. Present for the meeting were all the Afghan commander's officers, about a dozen or so. The LtCol went around the room to introduce himself.

*Well it gets to this one officer, and I haven't met this officer, and he stands up and after the... they always start off by saying, "praise be to Allah..." he points over to me in front of all the Afghan officers and says, "**This man is a jerk**," as my interpreter is whispering in my ear... Now, I'm leaving a family behind, I'm deployed, and part of me is thinking, "I don't need to take this crap..." But **I bit my tongue, swallowed it**, and what I wanted to do was be humorous without being crazy looking. And he was the Religious Officer, in fact, so I said, "clearly you are a wise man, for my wife, too, thinks I'm a jerk." And it broke out a cacophony of laughter... Fast forward, he became my biggest advocate through the whole deployment, that Religious Officer, because of that experience, that's what he told me.*

*I believed for me to be effective I could never show that I lost my temper. I had to consistently remain calm, cool, and collected under circumstance. My initial tendency when he said that I'm a jerk, I wanted to say, "Hey buckaroo, I'm here to help you guys, you're not doing anything for me here." But I kept that in and I think I didn't display any of that in my physical demeanor, deportment, decorum... I just stayed there and looked stoic and just cracked a little grin and responded. If I could demonstrate...***if I were perceived by the Afghans in that moment to come unglued, they would probably say that "he can't control his emotions,"** *and that was another thing I learned in training is that for a Pashtun man is you always keep your emotions under check. So if I could not control my*

emotions there could they trust me in a firefight? So I tried to demonstrate that not only could I remain cool but I could turn this around and show that I can kind of influence and kind of be in control. And I thought that I won on that one. (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

Here, the LtCol uses perspective taking to figure out a way to present himself in order to achieve a certain effect in his audience. A related use of perspective taking is when it was used to figure out ways to get others to see *one's own* point of view.

In Baghdad after we ceased hostilities and we were transitioning from combat operations to security operations, we had a situation, where the power had been out. And so what was happening is there was a riot situation about to happen, there was a crowd of Iraqis of several hundred, maybe even 1,000 people, who were starting to press up against the marines at the wire, and demanding to know when the electricity was going to be turned back on, demanding to know when the water was going to be fixed, and where was Saddam? I was a LtCol at the time, to get out there and to stop the situation before it escalated and somebody got hurt. ... And I honestly had no idea what I was going to say because how do I diffuse a situation, and how do I resolve the situation without it escalating? And then I noticed an older lady, she looked to be like a grandmother, dressed in all black, which is symbolic of somebody in mourning, near the wire and because the crowd was so rowdy, they were pushing her into the concertina wire, hurting her.

*It would have been very easy for me to get up there, and even though I spoke Arabic, for me to get up there and say, "Listen, we're here, we're in charge, we have the guns, you better disband, or we're going to take action." And that would have been very counterproductive, that was absolutely the wrong thing to do and I knew that before going out there. So **what I had to do is figure out a way where I could get them, so to speak, on my side, to see things from my perspective.** And that's why I used the example of saying, "why are we doing this? Why are you pushing up against grandma here and pushing her into the wire? This is haram; this is not the way you're supposed to be doing things." Haram is the Arabic word, it literally means shame. "You're shaming yourselves by harming one of your own, this little old lady." And so that was very effective for me and, to be perfectly honest, I didn't sit down ahead of time thinking, okay, this is what I have to do, this was kind of reactionary type of thing that happened for me and it was very successful.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

As in this example, in several cases where one used perspective taking to manage self-presentation, the insights gained were employed to create a certain impression in an audience. At times, the objective of this kind of creative influence was to develop a 'true' bonds, or relationship; at others it was much about manipulation. This following illustrates this notion well.

***Of course, I lied about my background, about having kids, just to establish some of the common ground**—he had four children, four boys, that he was extremely proud of and in Arabic and African culture, the more boys you have,*

*the better off you are because you know if you fall sick, that your children, your boys will be able to take care of you. So there, **for him, having four children was more than having $1M in the bank, that was his wealth, that was his pride**—he was always talking about them. And, of course, I didn't have any children, not yet. "Well I can help you out, you know, because I have four boys, it's in my genes, and everything else."* (Army SSgt)

3.1.3 Cultural Knowledge

For the purposes of this study, we defined cultural knowledge very broadly. We define it broadly because the cultural knowledge code represented a large number of very diverse knowledge related competencies from the original list of 40 from the RACCA working group. We included information about specific cultures and culture in general; also included is formal knowledge (usually acquired through training of self-directed research) as well as facts and theories that interviewees had themselves derived from experience.

The Cultural Facts & Theories code was the most frequently applied code across the dataset. Coders noted 370 instances of interviewees identifying, applying, or learning some fact or theory about a region or culture in which they were operating, which makes for about 28% of all competency code applications. The most common application of cultural knowledge was to explain behavior. By far the majority of facts related to history, regional geography, demographics, or religion; and the majority of the theories mentioned were ones that interviewees themselves had developed over the course of their careers. The finding that the service members in this sample applied only a few formal theories related to culture indicates that understanding formal cultural theories may not be critical for cross-cultural effectiveness.

Nature of Cultural Knowledge. In general, although there were similarities in the topics of knowledge that interviewees knew and cared knowing about (history, geography, demographics, and religion), there was amazing variety in the specific items of knowledge they had and applied. The finding that their cultural knowledge was very much ad hoc, suggests that it may not be possible to anticipate or predefine a set of specific cultural knowledge requirements. See for example how a Marine Corps Master Sergeant used her knowledge of Afghan crop cycles to communicate with a group of local women.

> *I had a group of women that I met with and they kept asking for jobs and teachers for their daughters. And I was like, "well I can't deliver that." They thought I could because I'm American and I had a money sign painted on my forehead. They set up this Economics and Education meeting for the very next day and I thought, I'm going to go in and they're going to say the same thing and I'm going to say the same thing. I have to think of something different. **How am I going to help them understand how long it's going to take?** Well I woke up that morning and I realized, ahhh… **planting cycles**, it's the seasons. **So I drew a series of pictures and I called it the Garden of Hope. And it was kind of a cross section of how the seeds, the seed is in the ground, and then the cycle of the plant, to a full tree with fruit on it.** And to these women, I said okay, this is your seed of the future. You HOPE you have a teacher, you HOPE you have security. This was a special seed, this is a seed that requires the whole community to plant it, and it*

doesn't grow over night, it takes a long time. And if, at any time, somebody in this community doesn't want it to grow, and they don't water it and help it grow, it stops growing. And, at some point, everybody in the community, when it grows will get fruit. And they looked at me and they're like, "you've opened our eyes! What can we do to help this grow?" I didn't realize how good it was going to be to use that example to describe to them, "Yes, you want all these things but I'm not here forever. But you are." And guess what they have now? They have a girl's teacher, and they have 25 women going through a health education program. (Marine Corps MSgt)

Further, the apparent diversity in the specific things interviewees knew about suggests that their knowledge comes primarily from experience—and from self-directed attempts at learning and increasing their understanding, more so than from formal training and education programs. Interestingly, very few of the interviewees relayed scientific theories relating to culture. Instead, based on their experiences, many had developed their own personal theories about cross-cultural differences and similarities in patterns of behavior and patterns of interaction.

*And at some point, which I could never figure out, [the Japanese] realize they've put you through the ringer enough. And they would [slams hand on desk] that's enough. This very serious meeting, they would suddenly say, let's go get some sushi and sashimi and have some beers. It was all friendship, you know. But, what amazes me, and this is un-American. That society, for example, and **some other societies, they can compartmentalize things. At one moment they can be very serious, almost angry. And then the next moment it's completely put aside.** And, an American can't do that, they can't do those things, you know. I was just so angry…I'm not going to turn around…and they don't understand it, cause they can compartmentalize these feelings and these emotions. We can't, so sometimes it's tough to read when they can do that. But you have to understand, that society does that. That's the way they do business.* (Marine Corps General)

*I grew up with Southern Baptists, and the only difference between a Baptist and a Methodist is that a Methodist will talk to each other in line at the liqueur store, no that didn't shock me at all. **If you strip away all the really exotic pieces that we focus on with religions and cultures, people are people, they react differently based on their culture but they still are people down below** and that didn't surprise me at all.* (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

Applications of Cultural Knowledge. Examples of applications of cultural knowledge included using knowledge within in social situations to demonstrate interest in a culture; using cultural knowledge to assess risk within the operational environment; and using it as a way to build confidence. Following, we provide more details and specific examples of the first two, and we discuss the relationship between cultural knowledge and confidence in the section on self-efficacy.

Almost without exception, every single interviewee described using cultural knowledge as a foundation for building relationships with natives.

*...find an opener, find some common ground, and find a way to show them that you care about them enough to have learned something. And I never had this happen but they're not going to ask, "oh well you brought up Karzai, so you must know what city he's from." It's not a test, it's **just bringing up some common ground that you can let them know that you cared enough that you'd looked it up and that you know it and that now you've started a conversation**. It's the same thing with language, too, have those three or four opening lines.* (Marine Corps Major)

*I remember dealing with and finding out, okay I'm going to Iraq this time again. And what I started doing about was reading about the history from Babylon on up. Geography, archeology, things like that because you never know what you're going to run into where someone is going to make a reference to something or talk about something and you're like, "oh," and **you can connect to them by saying, "well I've heard the Garden of Eden was supposed to be this spot over here, have you seen it?"** and they can talk to you about that. Or the Tower of Babylon, things of that nature.* (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

As one Army Captain pointed out, cultural understanding can even make up for poor language skills in social situations:

*When you show that you know something about their culture...to them it's kind of like a check, it's like, oh okay, you know a little bit, hey? And it's like, **I'm not very good with languages so it does help break the barrier in a way I can't do through language**.* (Army Captain)

In this way, using knowledge one has already acquired, however minimal, can help facilitate building relationships by demonstrating interest. Some interviewees also provided examples of ways in which one can employ cultural knowledge to assess risk. This account from an Army Captain provides a specific example of how basic cultural knowledge can be used to evaluate the trustworthiness of an interpreter:

*When you're first meeting your interpreters, you have to figure out where they're coming from, what they believe. My feeling is I don't want to get blown up... so what is it going to take and can I trust him? Is he a suicide bomber? I have to figure these things out. And, you can't just ask that question, 'are you Taliban?' You have to weasel your way into it somehow, and maybe throw some hints out there... I know some nuggets of information that I think would kind of call your bluff-type of information. Like **"what do you think of Massoud?" I'll just throw it out there and see what happens**. Then I look for indicators, looking for any reason to doubt, and I guess that is the bottom line. ...So **the more I know, the more I can roll in certain situations and test the water.*** (Army Captain)

In this way, some interviewees used their initial knowledge to assess risk, and this set the stage for them to recognize and create opportunities to develop relationships and increase their

understanding. One Air Force Captain's[1] recollections from his first month in Afghanistan illustrate the outcome of not having an initial understanding of a new area and culture:

> *I really didn't know what to expect. Everything I'd been told in training was that every piece of trash is going to blow up and take your legs off. And the fact is there's trash everywhere. So, I mean, you're jumping at shadows. You don't know what to take as a serious threat.* (Air Force Captain)

The Marine Corps General provided an excellent counter-example, noting that *"...the amount of risk isn't as great as it might appear when you have an understanding of who you're with and what you're doing."* Once risk has been established, it is easier to create further learning and relationship-building opportunities, such as hanging out with interpreters during down time and talking to them about their language and culture, or accepting dinner invitations.

3.1.4 Self-Presentation

In coding for self-presentation, we noted instances in which interviewees either deliberately changed or adapted some aspect of a strategy for interacting with members of local cultures; or, in which they deliberately retained aspects of their habitual style of interaction in order to achieve some kind of effect on their audience. We noted 200 excerpts that were relevant to self-presentation, making up a total of 15% of the competence code applications. The majority of these instances related to deliberately changing or adapting aspects of the way in which one presented oneself, or the way in which messages were communicated (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Distribution of Excerpts Relating to Self-Presentation*

Adapt How Expressed	#	%
Doesn't adapt	23	11.5
Adapts	177	88.5

These findings suggest that the ability to be deliberate about and adapt one's self-presentation is a critical aspect of cross-cultural competence.

The ability to find effective ways to present oneself appeared to involve visualizing how one wants to be perceived by another person—that is, developing a plan for which messages one should communicate in order to achieve a certain impression, and how those messages should be communicated. For example, the LtCol who was called out as a Jerk by an Afghan thought very carefully about the points he wanted to get across with his response—and, importantly, his primary objective was not about showing respect, rather it was to show that he could be in control:

> *I understood that for me to be effective **I could never show that I had lost my temper**. I had to consistently **remain calm, cool, and collected** under any circumstance. If I were perceived by the Afghans in that moment to come unglued,*

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[1] This participant was not included in the final sample due to insufficient experience; only one deployment.

*they would probably say that 'he can't control his emotions,' and that was another thing I learned in training is that for a Pashtun man is you always **keep your emotions under check**. So if I could not control my emotions there, how could they trust me in a firefight? So I tried to demonstrate that not only could I remain cool but I could turn this around and show that **I can kind of influence and kind of be in control**. What **I wanted to do was be humorous without being crazy looking**.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

The above example also illustrates the LtCol's ability to control his emotional reaction. In the section on Emotional Self-Regulation, we will discuss in more detail the relationship between emotional control and the ability to adapt self-presentation.

Being flexible in how one expresses and presents oneself means thinking both about the content of messages and about the context in which they are communicated. We heard several examples of interactions in which interviewees deliberately translated or transformed the content of their communication, that is, the concepts they were trying to get across into formats more easily comprehended by their recipients.

*At one time I was trying to get my [Afghan] battalion commander who I was advising to ensure that his living quarters had hygiene and that they were taking out the trash, so you wouldn't have diseases and rats and all that, and to cut the grass. For a military unit you want to look disciplined. And three weeks had gone by, a month gone by, and six weeks had gone by, and he isn't cutting the grass. So what I did was, I called [the battalion commander] and then with my interpreter, I went to him and I said COL [Name], the last six weeks... and it was a point in our relationship where I could be a little more direct with him because he trusted me. And I basically told him, "COL [Name]**, the only growth I've seen in your battalion in the last six weeks are the weeds around your building**." And he understood exactly what I meant and, sure enough, within 10 minutes after our meeting, we had many other subjects, he had people out there cutting grass. Versus, first me telling him, "go cut your grass," or "I recommend you cut your grass." I used that and he got it.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

Most commonly, the interviewees' objectives for adapting or changing aspects of their self-presentation were not always related to respecting or accommodating to local customs and expectations. On some occasions, their objectives were to blend in; but on other occasions their objectives were to use their understanding to manipulate decisions or perceptions to their own advantage. Thus, they were very intentional about how they presented themselves in the sense that they controlled when they would or would not change aspects of their natural tendencies or ways of communicating in order to achieve specific effects.

*I actually brought more out because usually I'm not a very laughy person, I'm happy but I realized that I brought, I put away my marksmanship instructor, I'm on the platform, I'm this really awesome marine, **I had to put that away**. I realized that my gender brought something different and when **I brought my human side, my laughing, and I made people laugh, and I learned a Pashto song and I sang to people**. It would stop people in their tracks. And these kids*

would come out the woodwork and say, "my mom heard about you, she heard that you were singing, and she wants you to come to her house." And "Come to my house," and "come to my house," "my mom's inviting you in," they sent… I mean the people are just amazing and they know if you're there to help, and they know if you're there to get something just for the of information. (Marine Corps Captain)

Another important goal, which is crucial for many of the tasks that military personnel carry out, is the need to ensure that other people respect them.

*I remember one time, it was a general officer wanted to meet with a bunch of Tier 1 Sheiks and I, fortunately, had developed a good working relationship with them and it was short-term notice which they don't usually like but I said, "hey, **we have to have this meeting, I need you all at this location in six hours." And I get the 'en-shallah,' and I was like, "no, no, no, la, en-shallah," and I said, "everybody WILL be at this meeting, and you WILL be there at the thing…" and they could understand the frustration.** And so it worked out but that was a frustration that was, "look, I don't have time now, I've spent the time building the relationship with you, but right now, this is important and I don't have time to play that game as we go through. **Now you have to play by my rules.** When you build that relationship with people then that's when you're able to go ahead and know the personalities and the dynamics of the group you're in so that if you need to be forceful you can be forceful, if you don't need to be forceful you don't need to be forceful. Once you set up that relationship where you can say, "no, this has to be done," then you can use it but you have to know when to pull that card out of your hat, too, because if you say it and they still say, "no," then you've lost credibility.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Importantly, the interviewees used their cultural knowledge and understanding to set *their own* self-expression objectives. That is, they developed their own objectives for what they wanted to achieve within social situations and determined what to do, what to say, and how to say it based on an understanding of their target audience. As the Marine Corps General observed in the quote at the beginning of this paper, *'cultural understanding helps you discover what your objectives should be.'* In the interview, he went further to describe the key to developing such understanding:

We [Americans] come so intent to convey a message, it's in our nature, and it's our cultural thing that we don't listen. We come with the message, pre-cooked. You know, it's the way we do business. And so, they shut down. I mean that can be disrespectful. You know, I really shouldn't form a message until I listen.

In general, we found that the interviewees tended to be very aware of the context in which they were acting or communicating. This means that not only did they take their recipient's point of view into consideration when they planned their messages, they also paid attention to *all* the messages that they were communicating through the context they themselves were creating: through word choices, body language, posture, dress, social context and actions (e.g., showing up early or late, showing up alone or with a security detail). The interviewees would tend to

anticipate in advance which and how many objectives could be achieved within specific interactions; and, sometimes they would go as far as finding other people who were better suited to deliver certain kinds of messages.

> *At times I would let some of the men around me talk instead of me. And that's key, I think, that **sometimes you don't have to be the person who leads the conversation** or is the person out front. If you understand that in some dynamics, having your male counterpart have that conversation for you, not being emotionally attached to you being the delivery person, but understand that it just needs to still occur, the conversation has to happen, you need to get things discussed, if you can put your ego a little bit on the table and understand that there are bigger fish to fry.* (Marine Corps Major)

3.1.5 Implications for Competence Model

The overall findings of the current study suggests that the four competency areas involving cultural sensemaking, perspective taking, cultural knowledge and self-presentation are indeed critical for successful performance across cultures.

Specifically we found that **cultural sensemaking** is a core competency that allows individuals to cope effectively with unexpected or surprising experiences within intercultural situations. These processes allow the individual to develop understanding of and explanations for behaviors or events within intercultural interactions initially experienced as surprising or confusing. As such, cultural sensemaking requires that one is alert to situations where behaviors or events that conflict with one's own expectations. It also involves recognizing that one's initial understanding may be flawed, and engaging in behaviors and cognitive processes that allow one to correct such misconceptions. These cognitive processes and behaviors include the ability to form explanations for behaviors, asking questions that explicitly challenge one's own fundamental assumptions about a culture. Finally, one must be able to develop sophisticated explanations of behavior that consider local cultural concepts to improve future accuracy of expectations. This suggests that **explaining behavior** is a competency in its own right.

We also found that **perspective taking**, or the ability to see things from the point of view of people raised in a different culture, merits inclusion as a core cross-cultural competency. In addition to having a high frequency of occurrence within the dataset, perspective taking appeared to support both immediate sensemaking and anticipation of the behavior and reactions of others as well as long term learning processes. Within intercultural interactions, perspective taking is complicated by the fact that a person's initial interpretations and projections are grounded in expectations stemming from the behavior learned within their own culture—i.e., their explanations are likely incorrect. The effective use of perspective taking within intercultural situations requires a certain level of awareness of this limitation. 3C also entails using perspective taking as part of reflective processing of past experiences as part of an ongoing experiential learning process.

As for the role of cultural knowledge within a 3C model, we found that people did not need to understand specific cultural facts and theories. The cultural facts that the interviewees knew tended to be ad hoc rather than acquired according to some theory or schema about cultural

differences. From a metacognitive perspective, a critical component of cultural knowledge appeared to be about **appreciating that it can be helpful to have learned something about a new culture before one enters it**. 3C also includes understanding specific ways in which cultural knowledge can be applied to accomplish mission objectives; including how even a minimal amount of cultural knowledge, and language proficiency, can be applied to make one more effective. As such, our results indicate that, within a model of cross-cultural competence, language proficiency can be subsumed within general requirements for cultural understanding. Lastly, our results suggest that the ability to **apply cultural knowledge effectively to explain behaviors of and build relationships with members of other cultures** should be included as core competencies.

The results of the current study suggest that **the ability to be intentional or planful about one's own communication is critical to managing one's self-presentation and self-expression within intercultural situations,** and should be included as a core competency. This means that one is able to set objectives for how one wants to be perceived by other people—and that one can present oneself in a way that enables achievement of an intended effect on the other person's perception. Importantly, the intended effects vary from situation to situation, and it is therefore critical that the individual is able to independently define mission-relevant social objectives. Adapting self-presentation in order to achieve planned social objectives in intercultural interactions also requires that one develops a plan for which messages one needs to send to achieve specific objectives and how one is going to communicate these messages. In this way it is also about the ability to think about messages and communication more broadly than just verbal communication. That is, one is able to both consider *all* the messages one is sending: with words, body language, posture, dress, and actions (e.g., showing up early or late, showing up alone or with a security detail). In addition to thinking carefully about the content and means of communicating one's messages, another critical contributor to successful performance was the **ability to enact self-expression and self-presentation in a disciplined fashion** in order to achieve the intended effect. This includes the ability to assess when it is most socially effective to adapt one's expression style, and when it's better to intentionally keep one's own expression style.

3.1.6 Language Proficiency

There were 88 excerpts in which interviewees talked about specific experiences using a foreign language, or reflected on the need for language proficiency—making up 6.5% of the total number of competence code applications. Many interviewees communicated the view that language proficiency is only helpful for initial, minimal interaction, and for developing social relationships by helping to demonstrate interest in and respect for another culture. In fact, 40% of the language related excerpts in some way reflected the opinion that only a minimal amount of language proficiency was required to be successful or effective in another culture.

Several interviewees noted explicitly that full language proficiency is not a requirement for successful interaction. In fact, for the general-purpose force population, attaining the level of language proficiency that is needed for conducting business or discussing serious matters is not realistic or necessary.

> *I don't think language is as important as people make it out to be. You know, you got to speak culture, not just language. I know people that are exceptionally well received in a given culture that can't speak the language and I know others that speak the language that don't get it.*
>
> *I don't want to demean the value of language to a certain extent, but, the idea that we can create true language and cultural appreciation is wrong. Or that we're gonna create a whole bank of people that are going to be fluent enough to actually get business done. ... You know, I always greet in a language. There are certain words you learn certain phrases and all. I would never do business…despite the fact that I speak a couple of languages…*
>
> *I think there's an appreciation if people make the attempt to speak it to some level, and they can communicate to whatever level, but I don't think…language doesn't equal cultural appreciation. We make that mistake a lot, I think.* (Marine Corps General)

The notion that the General conveys in the quote above, that 'there's an appreciation if people make the attempt' to speak a foreign language formed a common thread through all the interviews. Every single interviewee illustrated through their own personal examples how they deliberately used their minimal language skills to demonstrate interest and to develop social relationships. Each practiced identifying and learning a few key words and phrases that helped them facilitate social interactions—in ways that felt appropriate and comfortable for them.

> *So I supplemented the pointy-talkie-cards with about a sheet of paper or two…with **a bunch of Iraqi phrases that were more like social lubrication than anything else.** Like sayings like, "see you again tomorrow," or there was one which, essentially translated to, "this is frustrating and useless," which turned out to be "yapsi tibin", it's "rice over beans," or "beans over rice", just let it get done.* (Marine Corps Major)

Importantly, not only had they come to terms with the fact that they were unlikely to become fully proficient in the languages prevalent in the regions they would operate in, they had developed expectations and strategies for acquiring the minimal language they would require to be effective. In the later section which describes the emergent theme around Learning we will describe some of the specific strategies interviewees would employ to acquire adequate levels of language proficiency through using cultural mentors.

3.1.7 Emotional Self-Regulation

Only 36 excerpts, or 2.7% of the total number of competence code applications, were related to emotional self-regulation. Within these excerpts, interviewees predominantly describe incidents where they controlled the outward expression of an internal emotional reaction to an event, behavior, or person. Very few incidents were ones in which they changed how they actually thought or felt about the event, behavior, or person—but instead were ones where they were able to not display those reactions outwardly. In this way, many of these instances were also ones in

which interviewees adapted or changed their self-presentation. Emotional self-regulation therefore appears to be a component of the ability to adapt self-presentation.

Consider the way this Marine Corps Colonel reacts when his concept of sanitation is tested.

> *I'll tell you another story and this is the Horn of Africa. I go into a village and I meet the village elder in this place in the Horn of Africa and it's a big deal for them, they're meeting a marine for the first time, everybody is out in their Sunday best. You can really tell this is an important meeting because they've come out to meet you and they're all in their garb. And this village elder is going to show me his little city, his little town, his little village and he's really excited to give me a tour and he grabs a Coke out of this cooler. And that had to be special; it was a cold Coke in this little cooler that had ice in it. So I don't know how he could have gotten it in the middle of Africa but it was obviously a big deal for him to give me a Coke, and especially one that was chilled. So that meant something, it was like getting a glass of Dom Perignon, or something. So I'm walking through this village and he brings me to his medical clinic and he shows me his medical clinic and he's really proud of this clinic and he notices as I'm standing there that I could not open my Coke so I haven't opened it up and started drinking any of my Coke. And so he grabs my Coke and* **he reaches into this medical bin of used medical equipment, like with the bloody gauzes and stuff and there was a scissor in there and he takes this thing, shakes it off, and opens my Coke with this thing and hands it to me.** *I'm thinking to myself, "did I just see that right?" Now he's giving a bottle of Dom Perignon, to what he would think of as the equivalent of a Dom Perignon in a bottle that was just opened by a scissors that was used to cut dressings off of all these people inside this... and I'm like, "I don't know if I should drink this thing, I'm probably going to die." And, of course, I could not NOT do it because it was obviously very meaningful for him and I would have insulted him. I guess my point of all that is how they see, obviously an awkward moment for me at least, maybe not for him but definitely for me as* **his view of sanitation obviously didn't matter but to me it did, it was a big deal**. *And all I could think about was "am I going to die from drinking this Coke?" And now he's telling me everything else that's going on in the city and all that's going right in one ear and out the other because all I could think about was this Coke. And how am I going to get out of this? ... I drank the Coke and I'm still living so I guess...* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Although the Colonel did not come out and say it directly, he implied that opening the cola using used surgical equipment was pretty disgusting to him. In this case, he would probably have preferred that Africans had the same values around sanitation as he does. But, given that they did not, he controlled his emotional reaction and adapted his response in order to show respect to the village chief.

A large majority of the excerpts identified as relevant to emotional self-regulation, instead of instances where emotional control was applied, were instances in which interviewees reflected on the importance of such control.

> *I've seen people yell at somebody, in public, and **the worst thing you can do in an honor-based or developed country is yell at an official, especially an older person, in public.** They're not going to yell back at you but that's it, you just burned that bridge, you're never going to have anything with them, under any circumstance.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Interestingly, the General reflected that there is a relationship between cultural understanding and the ability to control your emotions.

> *I don't become frustrated like the major I told you about that, when his counterpart wanted to go pray when he wanted to go through the plan. **Understand why it's coming about that way. Where it's coming from? Why do we think that way?*** (Marine Corps General)

3.1.8 Affect/Attitude

There were 92 instances of expressed attitudes towards culture, cultural groups, and individual members of different cultural groups in the data—making up 7% of the competence code applications. Among these, most of these expressed attitudes were positive (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Distribution of Excerpts Relating to Attitudes Towards Culture*

Attitude about Culture	#	%
Negative attitude	13	14.1
Detached or indifferent attitude	11	12.0
Positive attitude	68	73.9

The following quote illustrates an Army Lieutenant Colonel's positive attitudes towards Afghans.

> *I think because you can look around and you can see that they're living in mud buildings and again, looking from a perspective of westerners, why aren't they building buildings? Why aren't they building something more permanent? Why aren't they doing these things? And I think that a lot of our troops, and I've heard the same things, I think a lot of our troops fail to step out of their perspective and **understand that they do these things because they work best for them**. And it's easy to see people who live with nothing doing nothing; you know what I'm saying? If you don't have materials which with to build a big modern building, then you're not going to. And I can only also say that I really did move too terribly far out of Kabul, but everything I saw, these folks are building things, **they're incredibly ingenious with woodworking, there was not a single thing that these Afghans could not build…if they could look at it, they would build it.** To go down to their central workshops, their central military workshops in SE Kabul, they can make anything with a hunk of metal and a file. So, no, **I didn't see anything lazy about them at all**. I certainly saw people who didn't have a lot and*

people who had not been taught a lot and might not know some things—ignorance certainly, but not stupidity and not laziness. (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

In a few cases, the same individuals appear to hold both negative and positive attitudes. In these cases, the same individuals may have positive attitudes towards some aspects of a culture and negative attitudes towards other aspects. In other cases, individuals have positive attitudes towards some cultural groups, but not others. The excerpt below illustrates the latter case—a Lieutenant Colonel who has great respect for Afghans, but less so for Iraqis.

> *The Muslim concept of fate, and en-shallah, if God wills it, the Iraqis seem to really embrace that pretty well, and 'hey, this wasn't my day, I got captured and it must be my fate to have this happen, so to fight against my fate would be against the will of God.' Afghans will know about en-shallah, but you hardly ever hear them saying it, they don't take the fate thing quite as literally as the Iraqis do. ...That was kind of a surprising thing. I was pleasantly surprised by that because I have my own cultural perspectives and prismatic view of things and **that's something that I never really respected about the Iraqis, I thought it was rather pathetic** ... I understand the physical reactions, I would probably pee in my pants, too, if I was captured. But, just sort of the giving up entirely and flopping and just not really expecting to do anything else except go to prison, I couldn't warm up to that. And **the Afghans were very engaging, I respected the hell out of them, I really did, I liked them a lot.** I liked them more than I thought I would.* (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

In several cases, interviewees would reason through experiences of cultural difference in which they had initially made negative attributions and developed more value-neutral explanations for those differences.

> *I think another one would be safety. I mean we have a certain expectation, we talk a lot about force protection, doing things safely, risk assessment, we don't want to do anything unduly risky, we've analyzed that risk. And then you look at the Afghans and they have this... they're building something, like a building, and you look at it and you're like, **"oh my god! I wouldn't step foot in that place."** And then we get all mad, "like this is inferior quality work, we've contracted to build this thing and we're paying you good money and this is the shabbiest craftsmanship I've ever seen in my life." **And so we have an expectation, when we say we want a house built, of what that would look like, because we all live in one that's built to a code. And then you do the same kind of contract in Afghanistan and then they get a mud hut, with some sticks and stuff, and so I guess, safety and construction standards, what's considered acceptable to the Afghans as far as those kinds of issues is far different from us.** Maybe even medical treatment, like what we would think would be an acceptable level of medical treatment, what's acceptable to them would be totally unacceptable to us.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

3.1.9 Withholding/Suspending Judgment

As was the case with emotional self-regulation, there were not many occurrences of withholding or suspending judgment, 36 total, or 2.7%. A few cases were objective descriptions of cultural differences, like the following quote, and as such 'pure' examples of withholding or suspending judgment.

> *As we were talking, one of the things that **I've seen a wide range of differences in the value of human life**, that's another thing I saw. It was like in Liberia it was almost no value on human life at all; whereas, in Afghanistan, surprisingly, you saw very high, they took it very bad when somebody died in an area, like collateral damage. In Iraq, it was kind of in the middle, you could, generally speaking, you paid, if you had a wrongful death, and you paid a fallasia [sp], which was kind of a death benefit then it was usually kind of water under the bridge at that point. So it's kind of a wide, what I've seen overseas, it's kind of a wide range of how the culture considers the value of human life.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Most of these cases were ones in which interviewees actively managed their judgments. They would note that a cultural value or practice was different, that it was difficult to make sense of, that they had an opinion about it, but, even so, they would not let it get in the way.

> *Yes, and I have to admit, yes, I did wonder about it, I still wonder about that. From somebody who dressed in western clothes and had a lot to do with the U.S. army that was there, and government officials and things like that, it seemed to me to be almost a contradiction. You want to be Westernized for yourself but maybe not so much for your daughter. But, again, that's who he was so **who am I to say whether that's right or wrong for him or for her? I mean I can have my own opinions but it is what it is**.* (Army SFC)

The behaviors that are coming out in this data set therefore appear to be more about managing one's judgments, getting past them, rather than suspending them

> *Right, that shock value, or whatever it is, yes… they're going to grill up a dog, or something like that, it's like, **"okay, weird, but different culture," it's not going to shut me down**, it's not going to stop me from doing whatever I'm doing at the time.* (Army Captain)

It was, therefore, not the case that interviewees would necessarily refrain from evaluating or judging the cultural behaviors they encountered. However, they were able to set any negative feelings or attributions aside in order to interact and build relationships in spite of them. In other words, they effectively managed their negative reactions, thus suggesting a great deal of overlap with the concept of self-regulation.

3.1.10 Self-Efficacy/Confidence

The interviewees expressed feelings about their confidence operating cross-culturally in 56 excerpts, or 4.2% of the total number of code applications. Interestingly, little more than half included self-expressed high efficacy (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Distribution of Excerpts Relating to Self-Efficacy*

Self Efficacy	#	%
Low	24	42.9
High	32	57.1

There appeared to be a common recognition among the interviewees that the mere act of seeking to understand another culture gives you confidence to go out and engage. One Marine Corps Colonel noted that learning some things about the culture 'peels away the unknown'. The implication here is that knowing about the culture reduces the uncertainty inherent in interacting with people who are very different and, thereby, increases confidence.

> *It may not be that you need to read 15 books to know certain facts, it's **just the act of reading builds your confidence**. I mean if you practice for sport… if you go, if I put you right now in front of a stadium of 10,000 people and say do this sport, are you going to be nervous. Or, if I give you a chance to practice for a year to where you get really good at it, and then put you there, are you going to be more comfortable? And that's what your training is doing.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Many of the descriptions of low confidence either were about low confidence in language skills, or related to earlier deployments.

> *I was the newcomer and **I didn't feel confident in my own knowledge and familiarity with the culture** to do that at that point. I felt uneasy but not unsafe. I mean I didn't think anything was going to happen, physically, to me but, at the same time, I wasn't sure which way to go with that. **I didn't have enough knowledge or background to know what is the best thing to say or do in this situation**; so I was kind of winging it.* (Army SFC)

> *But yes, that sort of feeling, "**God, I don't know how I'm going to do this**, because this is a lot, and it's not just a normal 'hi, how are you doing? I'm so-and-so, I'm 30 years old," or whatever… Knowing that you're interested, knowing that you've done some things to prepare gives you confidence.* (Army Captain)

The notion reflected in this last quote, that 'because I am interested—therefore I feel ready' did emerge in several of the interviews. This Army Captain went on to describe how the preparation he had done prior to his deployment helped boost his confidence.

*So with that, it was that particular experience to me, one it was very frightening, but it also gave me a lot of confidence. It was frightening in the fact that I'm on my own and we really haven't quite figured it out yet. Because I wasn't a trained anthropologist, I wasn't a social science anything, **I'd done a lot of reading, personally, and I used the heck out of the library and read lots of textbooks.** So this was sort of trial-by-fire kind of thing. So, in that regards, it was very frightening. The confidence builder was "I can do this." It's been a long time, I'm a little rusty, but that's okay, people understand and we can make it through. And then just sort of figuring out my program, if you will, how you engage somebody. And I think we do that in English, in our own culture but it's just so natural because you've been doing it for so long that you don't really realize that you have a plan of how you engage someone.* (Army Captain)

The implication here is that while the interviewees may have low self-efficacy initially in their ability to engage in a new culture (likely because they appreciate that there is a lot they do not know yet about the culture)—they are fairly confident in their abilities to learn about new cultures.

In the following section, we outline the overall implications of the behaviors and cognitive strategies observed in the data for the competence model.

3.1.11 Implications for Competence Model

The notion that one must be able to prevent one's personal feelings and values from getting in the way of interacting effectively with people from other cultures was a central theme across the last three competence areas, Emotional Self-Regulation, Affect/Attitude, and Withholding Judgment. The implication is that these three areas all relate to a central competency, which is generally about **managing one's attitudes towards values and customs that are different from one's own**. We found that emotional self-regulation most frequently occurred in the context of adapting one's self-presentation and therefore have support for including the ability to manage the feelings and reactions that one experiences in intercultural situations as part of a broader competency related to the ability to engage in **disciplined self-presentation**.

Lastly, attitude about culture, withholding judgment, and emotional self-regulation all appeared to be related to the individual's ability to manage their thoughts about and reactions to unexpected or divergent events or behaviors within a culture. We found that managing personal attitudes about other cultures entailed recognizing one's own current negative attitudes and having **the ability to either transform these into positive attitudes—or be able to set them aside to accomplish tasks**. This means that one must be able to analyze one's own cultural assumptions, values, and biases objectively, and recognize that they differ from other value systems. We therefore include the ability to **develop objective explanations for value conflicts** as a behavioral indicator of **competence in managing attitudes towards culture.**

3.2 Mission Success

In the interviews, we also asked about explicit ties between specific behaviors or cognitive activities that interviewees would describe and mission success. In the following, we describe

the key causal relationships related to mission success that interviewees had explicit awareness of which appear to contribute to their success in intercultural environments.

3.2.1 Cultural Understanding Enables Establishment of Human Contacts

The interviewees in the study had an explicit appreciation that cultural understanding and skills, such as perspective taking and the ability to adapt self-presentation was important for establishing contacts with members of foreign cultures. Without exception, every interviewee in the sample described using their cultural knowledge and skills as a foundation for building relationships with natives.

In the following quote, the Marine Corps General explicitly puts forth the view that cultural understanding is critical for accomplishing key military missions in the contemporary operating environment.

> ...**understanding that your life is going to be constantly spent in other cultures**, *doing these sort of things, in situations that are basically built around crisis, you know, whether it's a humanitarian mission, peace keeping, or actual combat and conflict, you begin to see the critical importance of* **culture as an element of understanding in order to achieve whatever goals you have out there**. *So, you know,* **it's just like tactics. I mean, if you're a Marine officer and tactics are critically important to success**, *I mean, why would you make a career out of it if you don't like tactics? So, why would you make a career out of doing this kind of stuff, if you don't like cultures and understanding them, because, it's as important as the tactics are, or the fire-support, or whatever, logistics, or whatever you have? So if you say 'I don't like that stuff', you're in the wrong business.* (Marine Corps General)

However, it is not just 4-star generals who have this high level understanding of the critical nature of cultural understanding and relationship building. The following quote from a Marine Corps MSgt illustrates both understanding of this relationship and the challenges involved in cultivating this understanding at the tactical level.

> *I'm an MP as well, so I'm not… maybe I'm too close to the flame sometimes, but* **I understood that the policing piece was really important in building a security capacity** *for those guys, it was hugely critical. And it's not sexy, and that's also tough selling it to a bunch of young Marines when they look at you like, "I didn't come here to* **train police** *and to do these things, I came here to shoot guns, get this shit, and kill bad guys, and all the stuff…"And so it was difficult initially to get their buy in because it's just not sexy. And that's just the way it goes. In fact, the measure of success is not getting into firefights actually. And the 19 year old kid who joined after 9/11, he just wants to go kill the Taliban, doesn't want to hear that. So I had my own IO campaign I had to spin at my level.* (Marine Corps MSgt)

A few interviewees also appeared to be motivated to learn about culture and to establish relationships due to intrinsic interest in culture and human dynamics, but they were the minority.

Instead, most interviewees were primarily motivated to learn about culture in order to be able to build strategic relationships. As one Army Captain put it:

> ***When you show that you know something about their culture…to them it's kind of like a check***, *it's like, oh okay, you know a little bit, hey? And it's like, I'm not very good with languages so it does help break the barrier in a way I can't do through language.* (Army Captain)

3.2.2 Human Contacts Enable Mission Success

As significant as finding that interviewees understood the importance of building strategic relationships is that when they built relationships they did so with the explicit intention to accomplish mission specific objectives. That is, the interviewees understood that they could leverage human connections and relationships to meet mission objectives. They understood that, as the General put it: *"Relationships allow things to happen behind the scenes."*

As such, none of the interviewees were primarily motivated to make connections with natives by a need to make friends. This does not mean that they did not make friends. But, making friends was not their primary motivation for learning about culture and for making connections with people. Instead, their chief motivation for building relationships was to *stay safe* and to *accomplish the mission.*

Making connections and friends are concepts that are easy to confuse and conflate; especially in the context of objectives that are part of the current Counter Insurgency strategy. It is tempting to interpret the objective of winning hearts and minds as a requirement to make friends. Cross-culturally experienced members of the military appreciate that they must understand the human environment they are operating in and build strategic relationships in order to feel safe and to shape it successfully.

> *So if I have to become that guy's best friend then that's what I did, despite of how I felt about what he'd done. I wanted to know what he knew so that I could use it to our advantage and deal with those particular individuals. But,* ***relating to him, being his best friend, getting into his head, finding out how he thinks, why does he think that way? And portray the image that I, somewhat, relate to him not in what he does, but in the way that he thinks about certain things.*** *It's not because you're a child molester that, "oh wait, you know what buddy, I'm a child molester, too." No, that's not going to work because he's going to see that and the next thing you know, he's closing the arms, and you're not talking. So portray the image that you do like those individuals and that everything is about them. If you choose to really put your heart into your feelings you can do so but you have to be extremely careful when you get disappointed or when something happens, or it doesn't turn out the way you want it to. So* ***portray the image that you care about those individuals and that you are concerned about what is going to happen to them***. *It goes a million ways, it goes so much further than anything else.* (Army SSgt)

Another important aspect of the way in which the interviewees thought about strategic relationship building was that they appreciated that using relationships to achieve mission goals requires a certain amount of patience and the ability to manage one's expectations. Overall, they had the understanding that they should not expect to achieve all, if any of their objectives within a single interaction.

> *And then **obviously, this is a time-consuming thing**, in other words, I just don't take off my helmet and they just start telling me everything I want to know. I have to keep coming back and visit routinely.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

> **To be relaxed, to be respectful, to listen**. *I think they all go after this thing…I can convince this guy. I'm gonna tell him that we can do this…I'm gonna tell him that this is in his best interest…I'm gonna tell him that this happened. All the telling. **It's the listening that does more than the telling for gaining respect.*** (Marine Corps General)

3.2.3 Relationship between the Nine Competence Categories and Mission Success

Examining the subset of excerpts (N=55) that made explicit references to mission objectives or mission success reveals a slightly different pattern in the frequency of occurrence of the nine competence categories than the overall pattern of results discussed earlier (see Figure 4). That is, in the context of references to mission success cultural knowledge, perspective taking, and self-presentation still occur most frequently X^2 (8, $N = 48$) = 31.13, $p < .001$. However, affect/attitude about culture appears more frequent than cultural sensemaking within this subset of the data. Examining the subset of the excerpts that relate to mission success and affect/attitude reveals that affect or attitude in this case relates to attitudes about learning about culture.
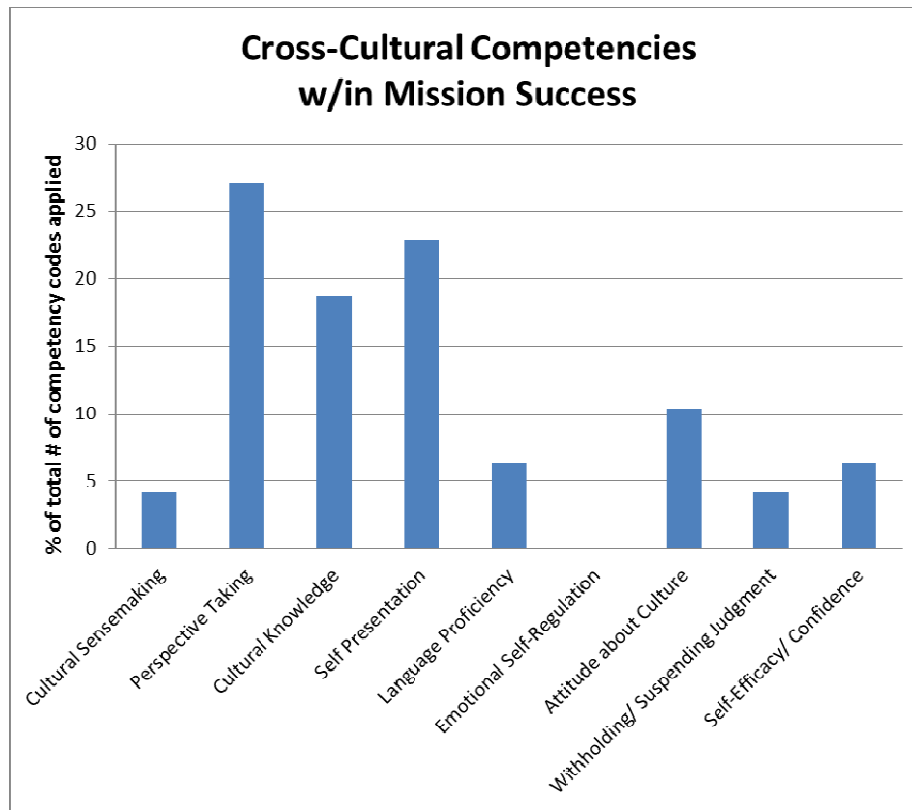
Figure 4. Frequencies of cross-cultural competency code applications in the context of excerpts that explicitly referred to mission-related objectives and accomplishment of same (as a function of total number of competency codes applied in this category (55), in %).

Perspective taking, cultural understanding, and self-presentation are used directly within intercultural interactions to facilitate building intercultural relationships—relationships that enable the individual to achieve mission critical objectives, or, attain mission success. Cultural sensemaking, on the other hand, encompasses a set of background reasoning processes, which enable the development of meaning and understanding, which in turn supports relationship building. The more indirect nature of the connection between cultural sensemaking and relationship building, and in turn mission success, may account for the relatively low frequency of cultural sensemaking references in this subset of the data.

3.2.4 Implications for Competence Model

The interviewees in our sample each provided several examples of successfully establishing and leveraging strategic intercultural relationships to accomplish mission objectives. They also tended to have the explicit understanding that building intercultural relationships can serve as a means to achieve mission objectives. This finding suggests **assuming a pragmatic, diplomatic stance towards intercultural relationships** is important for success; and that it should be included in the model. Similarly, the interviewees exhibited explicit understanding that cultural knowledge and skills can be used to develop and maintain strategic intercultural relationships. This understanding appeared to provide continual motivation for them to seek to learn about culture.

The main implication of the above findings for the 3C model is that having a high-level appreciation of the connections between developing relationships, having cultural understanding, and mission success is critical for mission performance. These results suggest that a competency that reflects **the ability to maintain such a mission orientation with respect to developing intercultural relationships, and cultivating cultural understanding** needs to be included in the 3C model.

In addition, the recurring finding that successful employment of strategic relationships requires a certain amount of patience, regardless of the cultural environment one is operating in, stresses the need for reflecting this in the model. Therefore, we include, within the mission orientation competency domain, the ability to maintain flexible expectations with respect to the number of objectives that can be accomplished in a single interaction.

3.3 Context

In addition to identifying the key competency areas reflected in the interviewees' experiences, we also tracked the context in which competencies were used. Two important patterns of results emerged from this level of coding. First, we found that the interviewees engaged in a great deal of self-directed cultural knowledge acquisition prior to deployment. Second, we found cultural sensemaking and perspective taking frequently use of across all levels of context, prior to deployment and both within and outside of interactions that had direct bearing on mission critical tasks.

Excerpts in the *'within interaction context'* category referred to activities and interactions that occur in the context of interactions that have direct bearing on mission critical tasks, such as mission execution, planning, rehearsal, or explicit attempts to gather information or intelligence. Excerpts in the *'pre-deployment'* category referred to activities and interactions that warfighters intentionally engaged in to prepare for upcoming deployments. Lastly, excerpts in the *'outside interaction context'* referred to activities and interactions that occurred while on deployment, but which did not have direct bearing on mission critical tasks. These kinds of activities and interactions often included socializing with natives, civilians, interpreters, or partnered forces for relationship-building purposes, or just pure entertainment such as sharing meals, participating in local customs or sports, deliberate attempts to engage natives to learn about local culture, language or history, or other deliberate, self-guided attempts to seek information.

As a general overview, the 1324 competency code assignments were not evenly distributed across the three types of context, X^2 (2, $N = 1324$) = 553.34, $p < .001$. Significantly more codes were assigned to excerpts that described specific, mission-critical interactions, and the smallest number of codes was assigned to the pre-deployment context (see Figure 5).
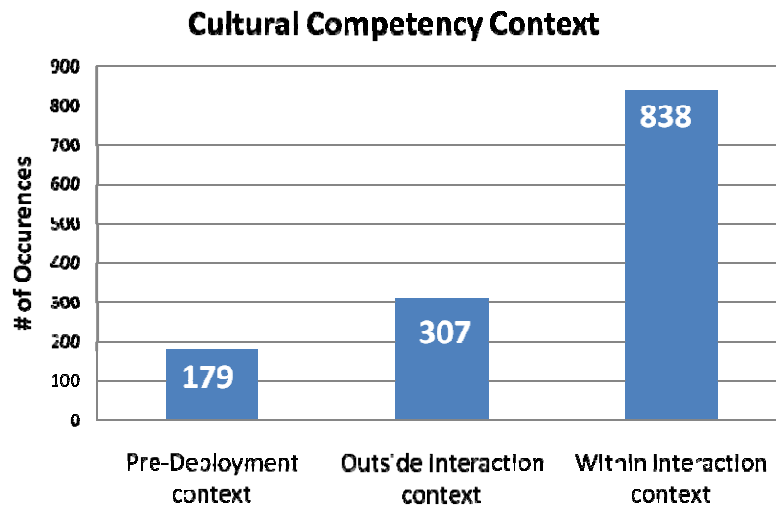
Figure 5. Distribution of excerpts that describe pre-deployment, outside interaction, and within interaction contexts.

The overall results described earlier (see Figure 3, p. 13) showed that the cross-cultural competency codes were not assigned with the same frequency. That is, cultural sensemaking, perspective taking, cultural knowledge, and self-presentation were assigned significantly more often than the remaining five competency areas.

This pattern of results changes slightly when we examine the distribution of competency codes separately for the three different levels of context. In the case of activities and interactions that warfighters engage in to meet specific mission objectives (*'within interaction context'*) competency codes are assigned with different frequencies, X^2 (8, $N = 838$) = 410.75, $p < .001$, and the overall pattern of results is similar to the overall pattern of results (see Figure 6). The same is the case for activities and interactions that warfighters engage in outside the context of mission-related tasks (*'outside interaction context'*) competency codes are also assigned with different frequency, X^2 (8, $N = 307$) = 198.73, $p < .00$, and the pattern of results is also similar to the overall pattern of results across contexts.
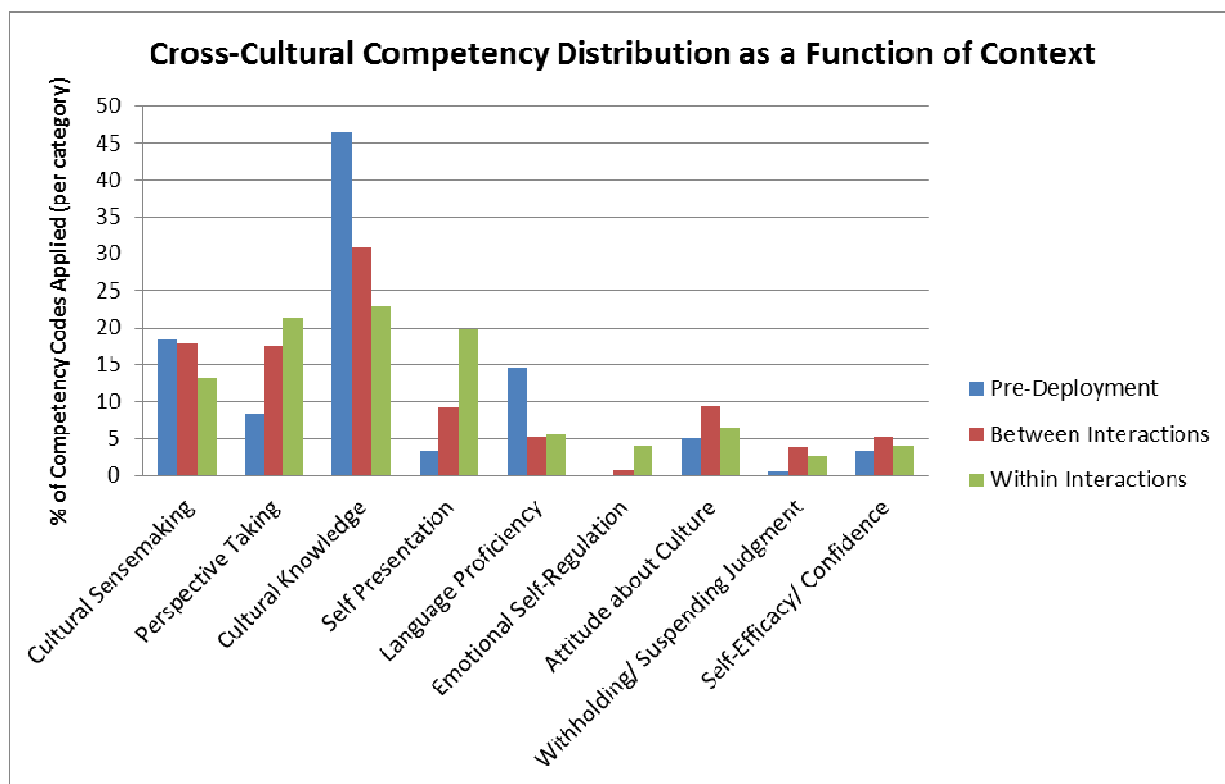
Figure 6. Frequencies of cross-cultural competency code applications broken out by context (as a function of total number of competency codes applied in each category (179, 307, and 838 respectively), in %).

In the pre-deployment context competency codes are also assigned with different frequencies, X^2 (8, $N = 179$) = 275.17, $p < .001$. However, here, cultural knowledge is assigned more frequently than other codes, indicating that interviewees engage in a great deal of information seeking prior to specific deployments. Given that very few of the interviewees had received formal culture training to any significant extent, the majority of this culture-related information seeking was of a self-directed nature.

Overall, perspective taking and self-presentation appear to be applied with relatively higher frequencies within the context of mission critical interactions, whereas cultural occurs slightly more frequently outside of these interactions. This finding may suggest that cultural sensemaking tends to contribute to longer term efforts towards learning and developing cultural understanding, whereas cognitive activities and behaviors related to perspective taking and self-presentation support more immediate interaction. Importantly, both cultural sensemaking and perspective taking do appear to operate outside immediate interaction contexts, which provide evidence for both competencies as central to the ongoing development of 3C over time.

3.3.1 3C is a Continuous Process

These results indicate that cross-cultural competence is not just about what a person thinks or does when they are engaging or interacting directly. Instead, the core behaviors associated with

cross-cultural competencies are applied or enacted over a temporal scale that spans pre-deployment, as well as before and after key intercultural interactions (see Figure 7).
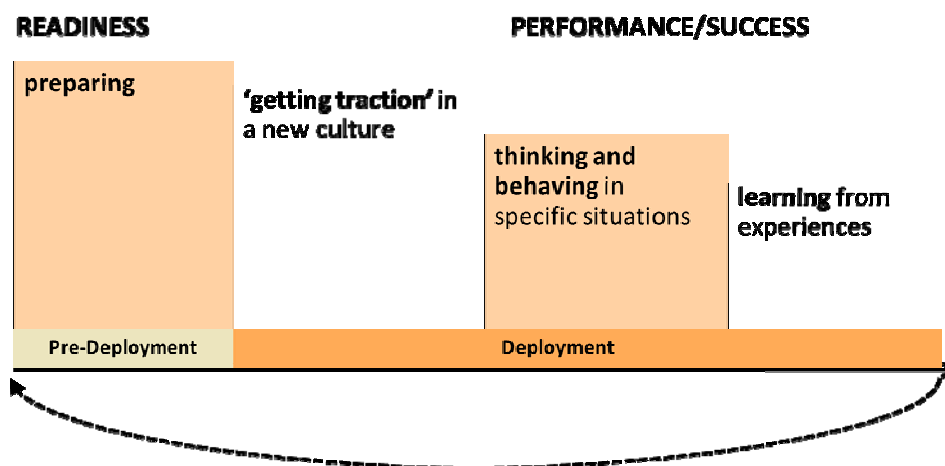
Figure 7. Cross-cultural expertise has implications for mission-related performance, mission readiness and ongoing learning.

For example, several interviewees had some prior knowledge (often they had 'heard some things' from other military operators) about a new culture and region before they had even started to research it as part of their pre-deployment routine. This meant that they had often already been puzzling over certain aspects of the culture—and they provided several examples of asking questions as a strategy for making sense of these kinds of puzzles prior to a deployment.

> *Well whatever peaks my interest. So as I'm reading through it and something catches my attention then I'll maybe research something further into that area. For instance, on Mazar-e Sharif and the blue mosque, okay, so I wanted to figure out the history of the blue mosque and **what's the deal with this, literally, blue mosque in the center of the city?** So I did some reading up on that.* (Army Captain)

> *I'm going to learn everything I can about Somalia, about the history. And I'm not going to just focus on the last 10 years. I'm going to focus on **what makes a Somali a Somali?** I want to know about their colonial history with the Italians, with the Brits, I want to know **why those people** are there and **why they're so markedly, ethnically, genetically different than say the rest of the Horn of Africa**, or the rest of Africa, period. I want to know about the Arab incursions, and about the spread of Islam there. And so, again, what makes a Somali a Somali?* (Army Lieutenant Colonel)

Along these same lines, we also heard several examples that indicated that the interviewees continued to think about and learn from experiences after they happened. The use of reflection as a means to understand and learn from a past experience can either occur internally, within

dialogue with a colleague, or with a member of the culture. A Marine Corps Major described reflecting back over a meeting with Afghan politicians that didn't go as planned:

> *At that time I remember flying back **with another Major and the General and we were talking about it – what were our expectations and then what happened?** And then we kind of… as I remember… kind of chalked it up to initial ice breakers, initial conversation is really difficult, maybe we reduced our topics to not so many, and we bring to the table only top priorities and concerns that we really wanted to have real conversations about instead of… we didn't have a ton of slides but the reduction of 1-2 slides and some major key issues, so that it wasn't overwhelming.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

The Marine Corps LtCol who was called a jerk by an Afghan also spent a great deal of time pondering over the incident afterwards.

> ***I didn't know where he was going with it at the time... Later on, I was able to deduce*** *that, he was trying to demonstrate his position in front of his peers and his boss that he was a man of importance and he was willing to use me as a way to demonstrate that by calling me a jerk.* (Marine Corps Major)

In a later interaction with the Afghan officer the LtCol aired his hypothesis about the officer's intentions; and, demonstrating to the officer that he had thought about the exchange allowed the LtCol to possibly set the stage for the development of a deeper relationship. We saw several examples that reflection could either occur internally as described above, or as part of a dialogue with a colleague or a cultural mentor (see discussion of cultural mentors in the Cultural Knowledge section).

3.3.2 Implications for Competence Model

The implications of the above results for the model is that a model of cross-cultural competence should include competencies beyond those directly relevant to direct, face-to-face intercultural interaction. Instead, competencies should be included that are relevant to readiness—these are competencies that speak to the individual's ability to adequately prepare for mission critical intercultural interactions, as well as **ability to learn from interactions in a self-directed manner** so as to better prepare them for future interactions.

Another implication of the finding that 3C involves a continuous process is the overall competency definitions and behavioral indicators should be written in such a way as to ensure the inclusion of complex cognitive activities, such as cultural sensemaking and perspective taking, across the pre-deployment and deployment continuum.

Based on these results, the model should include the **ability to continue to reflect on and learn from intercultural interactions and experiences after they occur**. In the upcoming section on emergent themes we will discuss specific findings related to experiential and self-guided learning more broadly as well as discuss how these should be included in competence model.

3.4 Emergent Themes

3.4.1 Understanding Self

The interviewees in our sample seemed to be very aware of who they are, and aware of the fact that they see the world in a particular way because of their own background, personal history, and culture. They appeared to recognize that when they interacted with someone who had a different background than them; their first interpretation of a situation likely did not match theirs. And that their first inclination about how to respond likely would not meet their expectations either. The Marine Corps General described this state of affairs in the following way:

> *The natural instinct for us is to see a fact and interpret it in our context, and not to say,* **my understanding of this—my context might not be the right one to interpret this fact**. *And that may be the most significant thing—that fact, that act, that decision, or that response—how do you do the interpretation? That's the real cultural question. Do I do it through my prism, or do I try to understand another prism which will give me more clarity and closer to truth?* (Marine Corps General).

Recognizing this mismatch appeared to continually drive interviewees to explore commonalities and differences between themselves and the people within their area of operations—and it often led them to develop their own theories about how Americans differ from other people in the world. Often they used their own personal interests as a starting point for this exploration. In the following sections we will present specific examples of these theories and strategies.

The service members we interviewed had each developed their own, personal theories about values and practices that set the American perspective apart from that of most of the rest of the world. A very common observation they make is that most of the rest of the world does not operate on the same timelines as Americans do, and have either no, or very different concepts of scheduling and planning. One way to frame this is that 'they are different.' The implication of this way of framing it is either that the American way is the right way (and others should change)—or, that maybe Americans should try to adapt to the way others do things in some instances. Another way to frame it is that our way of thinking about time is unique—and that our way may even present a weakness at times. The individuals in the study cited several examples in which 'the natives' recognized that Americans think about time and schedules a certain way, and used that knowledge to influence us. For example, an Army captain described an experience in which Afghan partnered forces were able to get the location of a training event changed by withholding certain information about the primary location until the last minute.

> *They know how we schedule. They know that things are less likely to change drastically as the deadline comes closer. They knew that the training exercise would still happen, but that we would pick a place closer to the compound other than take the time to find another one further away.* (Army Captain)

Another common observation among the interviewees was that Americans tend to be not only task-oriented—they like to look for tasks to accomplish, and problems to solve. The notion of the 'hardworking American' and the 'can-do attitude' represent strong cultural values from our

perspective; but these can produce negative impressions other places in the world. Several of the interviewees made a note of this—and indicated that it is a difference they keep in mind whenever they work and travel overseas.

> *I think people often think we're arrogant, and that we can solve things that the depths of which we don't even really know. But, because we're Americans, and that's what we are, problem solvers, we can solve everybody's problems. Sometimes we think of things as problems that aren't even problems, as a country. That's the whole culture difference thing.* (Army Ssgt)

Other core value concepts, which the interviewees found it useful to keep in mind as setting Americans apart, included the notions of equality and loyalty. Americans want everybody treated equally. Moreover, loyalty to an American often means "you talk to me only—and interacting with my enemy is a breach of loyalty."

> *Afghans tell you all the time, 'you're only here for a year or two, and I'm here for the rest of my life. I have to find a way to survive. And even if that means being friends with the enemy.' But that's totally accepted and we view it as being disloyal or disloyal. But it's not; it's just a matter of survival. You don't get to be 70 years old in Afghanistan by being dumb.* (Army Captain)

The interviewees realized that bringing perspectives like this to situations in which they may be wrong or irrelevant could lead to, at best, uninformed decision making. Further, many of them, in having accepted that their view of the world is not the only view has brought about a humility that in turn supported an innate motivation for learning.

> *I temper myself with a dose of humility by reminding myself that, hey, you don't always see things right or know things. If I do that I may put myself on a false precipice, or pedestal, from which I could fall. So what I say with that is, even though I've been to Japan a few times, I say…what more can I learn?* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

3.4.2 Learning

Self-Directed Learning. The interviewees in our sample were self-directed learners in the sense that they used their own personal interests as starting points for learning about new cultures. As such, by formulating their own questions about a culture—they were *defining your own learning objectives*. These self-defined learning objectives reflect areas about which they were intrinsically motivated to learn. Their intrinsic motivation sometimes came from long-term interests or immediate needs to improve or adapt action. Some of them had life-long curiosity about human social, cultural and psychological dynamics:

> *Because you're dealing with humans, you're not just dealing with a nuclear bomb, you're dealing with attitudes and perspectives and what shapes it, how do people see things? How do people react to this? And what values do they define and what are their morals? What are their ethics? I find that stuff interesting, personally.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

However, this was far from always the case. Instead, many of them had deep, intrinsic interests in history; some were interested in religion, others in sports, yet other again in weapons. One interviewee, particularly interested in knives, would take every opportunity to discuss knife-making practices with local Afghans. In this way, he used his intrinsic interest to establish a personal connection to the culture.

What the interviewees had in common was that they all used their personal interest areas as a basis for formulating questions about a new region or culture, the answers to which they are intrinsically motivated in finding the answers to. Further, in a self-directed manner they sought the answers, either through research prior to deployment, or through conversation with locals once on the ground. Importantly, in addition to using different starting points for their learning, they also had developed different strategies for obtaining information and extending their knowledge about culture. Many would start with the information they could obtain on the internet. One Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel described his approach for learning about culture using the Web.

> *One of the first things I'll do is just cruise the internet and see what's out there. There's usually ex-pat sites, there's always Wikipedia, and I start balancing these things and seeing what the commonalties are and the things that I hold true. And it may say one thing for instance, on Wikipedia, okay, that sounds real, but what are the sources? Where did that source come from? I look at the footnotes and I'll start following the links back and that honestly starts leading me into places that are more fruitful and more truthful. And then just asking people who know about it, or people that I run into about it, or folks who are out there on the web holding themselves out as experts. I found most of them are amazingly approachable and love to talk about it.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

Many were very creative in both the sources they identified and the strategies they used for obtaining information they felt would be useful for them.

> *When we first got into country I was reading…* **I had found this collection of Afghan fables, Afghan Pashtun fables,** *and I was reading through them trying to translate them and I found some English versions of the stories and I was just sort of trying to educate myself, just because I feel that those kinds of stories teach people about… kind of like here in the States, or anywhere else, it teaches cultural transference, it's socialization, it's teaching your kids about the culture. And it's rooted, I mean you hear those things as kids so that's where it sits in the back of your mind. So I was reading those fables just because* **I felt that was a very important way to understand how people raise their children, or how they are raised, or what their decisions may be based on.** (Air Force Captain)

> *But one of the things that I think, to answer your question correctly, that helped us is understanding that the importance of Somali culture focused on the family first, and then the clan, and then the tribe. And so understanding that was the center of gravity of Somali culture before we went over there, and* **we did not get that from the military, we got that from the universities,** *but that what was key and important to us. But it was only because we exercised some flexibility in*

*going outside traditional channels to get that information, i.e., going to the universities… UC-Berkeley, when they found out we were military, refused to communicate with us, they would not help us because they just disagreed with us going there. Whereas, the University of San Diego was very cooperative. So we also had to realize, when I would call and say "This is Capt. [Name], can you help me?" "No, I'm sorry we can't." If I'd call and say, "This is Mr. [Name]," or, in some cases, **I'd fudge the notes a little bit** and say, "This is Dr. [Name], I'm doing a dissertation…." Then people would actually be supportive to me.* (Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel)

By using their own questions as the starting point for learning about culture, and by developing and using their own strategies for getting information, the interviewees were making the information and their learning relevant to themselves. The Marine Corps General we interviewed had been a student of culture and human history for many decades, and had of course developed a very sophisticated personal framework for organizing cultural information and for learning about new cultures. Although enacted in different ways, the primary objective, though, was shared among the interviewees in our sample: Making culture learning meaningful to oneself.

*So, I mean, sometimes you have to do that on your own. There's not enough written, or understanding about, OK, I'm going into this culture, I wanna read a history of the culture. I want to understand and read about its geography, you know, I want to understand its belief systems, its religious systems and how they came about. Do this sort of religious comparative study. Let's take an issue like free will that almost every religion has had. There are certain issues that every religion has to deal with, especially if you believe in an omnipotent, Supreme Being. Well, how did they each come down on these? Cause it's very important for how they shaped thinking. So, you need a template for cultural dissection if you will, examination, or analysis if you will. And then the synthesis has to be, how do I reconstruct what I've learned, and **break it down in a meaningful way to me.*** (Marine Corps General)

Learning from Experience. For example, we found that the interviewees consistently expected to continue to learn new things about a culture the whole time they were in it.

So you do a lot of prep before you go over, but then once you're there, it's ongoing. You're always…you are trying to learn something new every day. (Marine Corps General)

*I think it's definitely good homework to do, it's good baseline understanding. But I would go in with an open mind to know that when I get there it's probably going to be a little bit different than what I read about in the textbooks, or what the experiences are from the guys in one area that may not have been exactly in the area I'm going to go into. So my experiences are probably going to be a little bit different. **But it's a good foundation to start from but when I get there I have to keep an open mind**.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

This is crucial for setting and managing expectations related to learning—both in formal pre-deployment training, and in an experiential context. Common across the interviewees in the sample was the practice of defining manageable expectations with regard to how knowledgeable or proficient they wanted and needed to become in a culture and language.

> *So learn that, learn an opener, **you're not going to become a historian, you're not going to become fluent in Pashto, these are all 'pie-in-the-sky', these are all hopeful things that people who are writing books, hope that would happen**, "I hope these people go over there and know the language. I hope these people would know something about the culture and history." They're not going to know everything so learn how to start a conversation, learn how to find some common ground. Let them know that you found this stuff out. I cared enough about your tribe to look up the fact that Karazai is Popalzai-tribe.* (Marine Corps Major)

Further, the interviewees also set an explicit expectation that they would learn about a culture when they were in it. They enacted this expectation by framing every particular experience and interaction they had while were in the culture as an opportunity to learn. And, they tended to think about the knowledge and skills that they acquired in training as foundational—that is, as a springboard for continuing learning.

> *I think that all that operational culture that you're given and all those briefs and stuff, it's good just to kind of put you on your guard that when you go downrange it's going to be different. Don't think of it as an absolute and this is the way it's going to be. But these are some of the typical things that we've experienced. **When you get there be open to the fact that there are going to be differences and to try to educate yourself as quickly as you can when you're in that environment to those differences.** When you get there…your first question is going to be "What are the differences?" I think that people want to learn it as if there are rules, like a mathematical set of rules but there's not. They're just not there.* (Marine Corps Colonel)

Cultural mentors. As part of their self-directed, experiential strategies for learning about new cultures, a common practice among the interviewees was to deliberately seek out experiences and relationships from which they could learn. Often, interviewees would seek to develop these kinds of the relationships early on in their deployments, and would use these relationships as a basis to get started, or to 'get traction' in a new culture.

> *To speak to a 70-year old Afghan, you don't get to be 70 years old in Afghanistan by being dumb. There was this guy who we kept running into and he sounded really intriguing. He didn't want to talk to us. But I guess I finally sort of wore him down out of curiosity on both parts, I was curious about him and he knew that, and **he was curious about me, and we just sort of ended up sitting on the side of the street, propped up against the building, having some tea, and talking to each other.** I asked him, and I pointed to his beard 'you're a very wise man, how did you get to be so old and wise?' and he sort of looked at me like, 'wow, you're asking me that question?' I could just see this whole, sort of cog-*

> *screeching, 'Wow! No one has ever asked me that question.' So that's when we sat down, he says, "well let's sit down, and let's talk about that."* (Army Captain)

We noted a couple of variations of the practice of deliberately establishing relationships with individuals who can support learning. Some were of a short-term nature, as in the quote above, and others are more long-term. Most commonly, though, the type of individual selected as a mentor was a cultural insider. Cultural insiders are members of the culture and can therefore can provide a wealth of information, and if they are asked the right questions, correct misconceptions.

We have heard numerous warfighters describe how they use their interpreters as cultural mentors. They will engage in ongoing discussions with trusted interpreters in order to vet and improve their knowledge of a region's history, culture, and language. At times, they even sought feedback from interpreters on how they performed in specific interactions, after the fact.

Just as demonstrating that one has some basic knowledge about a culture can serve to build bridges—the very act of showing interest in learning about it can too. Several interviewees cited both wanting to learn more and wanting to strengthen local relationships as a dual motivation for identifying and interacting with cultural mentors.

> *A month into my tour I had my [Afghan National Army] soldiers teach me the letters of the alphabet (see Figure 8). In five minutes there was a crowd of 12 people around us. I could tell that it did something to them that someone cared enough to learn their language. It was important to them that I respected their culture and language. After that I was really able to start a dialogue with a lot of the soldiers. With a few in particular, our relationship changed from that point on.* (Air Force Major)
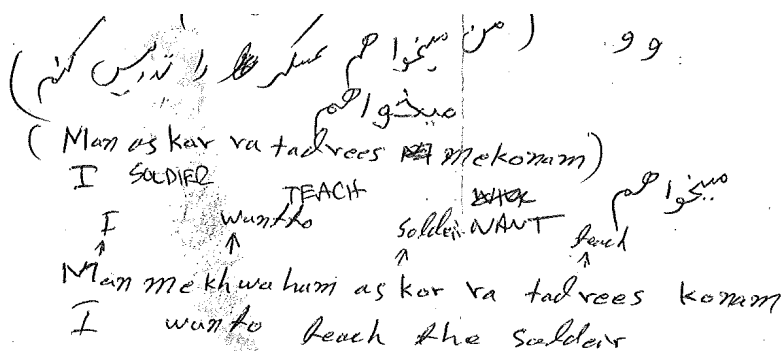
Figure 8. Excerpt from an Air Force Major's library of English-to-Dari translated words and phrases that he produced in collaboration with his ANA soldiers.

An important issue related to using cultural insiders, like interpreters, as mentors is that they can at times provide skewed, or biased perspectives. If a mentor is providing insights about the behavior or intentions and motivations of someone whom they do not like, either personally, or because they belong to a certain ethnic group, the information they provide may be less than reliable. Several of the interviewees appeared to be aware of this, and talked about how they

would often check up on the information provided to them by native mentors. They might look for a second opinion, or at times go online after a discussion to check the facts they had been provided.

> *There could be a slant there or a hidden agenda there that I don't know of. So take it with a grain of salt. He says something then I can go back and get online and say, "all right, let's see what this is," and verify and check.* (Army Captain)

This would serve as both a check on the validity of the information itself but could also allow them to assess whether their informant, in general, was reliable.

3.4.3 Implications for Competence Model

The results of the study suggest that self-awareness, and **the ability to think about oneself within a cultural context** is a critical component of cross-cultural expertise and that a related competency should be included in the model. The interviewees in our study not only tended to think about themselves as representing a culture; they were also aware of the aspects of their own selves, including their personality attributes, cultural assumptions, values, and biases that made them different from (and would likely make them 'stick out' in) most other cultures in the world. Further, the findings suggest that a general competence around cultural self-awareness subsumes **the awareness that one's way of viewing the world is a result of own unique background, personal history, and culture**; as well as the ability to recognize when other people view the world differently and to continually seek to understand these differences.

The ability to **continually advance understanding of one's own and other cultures** is a core-learning component of 3C. We found that an individual's ability to learn about a new culture entails two general components; first, the ability to *prepare* adequately for overseas deployments and the intercultural interactions they entail; and second, the ability to *learn from experiences* within specific cultures while on deployment. Within each of these learning contexts, it is critical that the individual takes ownership of their own learning by framing questions and seeking answers relevant to aspects of a culture. In addition, that the individual uses current knowledge as well as their own personal interests as a starting point for researching and understanding a culture; and that they develop strategies and identify sources for obtaining information about new cultures. The latter includes developing approaches for identifying, building relationships with, and establishing the credibility of individuals who can provide insight into a culture. These findings suggest that competencies related to **self-directed learning of culture** as well as related to the ability to **develop reliable information sources** merit inclusion in the 3C model.

The interviewees in the current study realized that they could not learn everything there was to learn about every culture they were deployed to. They were therefore very pragmatic about their own learning, and very efficient in defining and acquiring the knowledge that they did need. They set their own expectations about how much and what kind of cultural knowledge (and language) they wanted to acquire prior to deploying. Setting personal, manageable objectives for one's own learning appeared to be critical towards ensuring that interviewees were not overwhelmed by the amount of facts and theories that could be learned, and thus served to sustain their motivation for learning. These findings suggest that the **ability to engage in**

efficient learning of a culture is important for the continuous development of 3C and that it should be included in a 3C model.

4.0 CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE MODEL

4.1 Model Content

Within the overall analysis of the data, examining the frequencies and relative relationships between the nine hypothesized competence categories we found evidence to suggest that there are three core competencies that are critical towards enabling the individual to think critically and reason effectively within intercultural situations. The first of these is **the ability to cope with cultural surprises** which encompasses a number of specific cognitive activities and behaviors which allow the individual to apply a rational/analytic approach to understanding or creating meaning from experiences which are initially surprising. Further, we found that the ability to use one's existing cultural knowledge to develop **explanations for behavior** supported both efforts to understand and to manage one's attitudes towards a culture and should therefore be considered a competency in its own right. Finally, we found that **perspective taking**, or the ability to see things from the point of view of people raised in a different culture, supported several other critical processes, such as cultural sensemaking, communication and self-presentation planning, as well as ongoing learning and therefore merits inclusion as a core cross-cultural competency.

Within the overall data analysis we also saw evidence to suggest that there are three competencies that are critical for being effective within intercultural interactions—regardless of the specific cultural context. The first of these competencies related to the individual's **ability to be deliberate, or planful about the effects they want to achieve on an audience**. Being planful is essential for being able to manage one's self-presentation and communication within intercultural situations effectively. Further, we found that the individual must be aware of alternative strategies for achieving communication objectives and have the **ability to be disciplined in their enactment these strategies**.

Finally, within the overall data analysis we found that discipline in how one presents oneself and communicates entails that one is able to **manage one's attitudes and reactions towards values and customs different from one's own.** This means that one must be able to analyze one's own cultural assumptions, values, and biases objectively and recognize that they differ from other value systems. Further, to be effective within intercultural interactions, one must be able to **either transform negative attitudes or reactions into positive ones—or being able to set them aside to accomplish specific objectives**.

Within our analysis of the data that specifically related to Mission Success and addressed the accomplishment of mission objectives, we found a critical relationship between an individual's ability to maintain a **mission orientation with regard to intercultural relationships**. This entails having the explicit understanding that intercultural relationships can enable the accomplishment of mission objectives, and further, having the understanding that cultural knowledge can be used to establish strategic intercultural relationships.

By examining the practices and cognitive activities that interviewees engaged, in both prior to and during specific deployments, allowed us to derive three competencies that support the individual's ability advance their cross-cultural competence over time. First, we found that individuals (members of the General Purpose Force particularly) must be able to maintain practical expectations about how much they need to learn about a culture so as to **be able to learn about new cultures efficiently**. Second, we found that individual's must have the **ability to be self-directed both in their approaches to preparing for deployments as well as in their strategies for learning from their experiences.** This means that individuals should have the understanding that ad hoc interactions and experiences are learning opportunities. Further, effectively learning from experiences entails having the **ability to continue to reflect on and learn from intercultural interactions and experiences after they occur**. Learning from experience also requires deliberately seeking out experiences and relationships that can advance one's cultural understanding. Due to the prevalence in the data of practices around establishing informal mentoring relationships, and to the apparent benefits of such practices for the development of cross-cultural competence over time, we included a competency that speaks to an individual's **ability to identify reliable sources of cultural information**.

Finally, the findings that interviewees were tremendously aware of their own cultural backgrounds and their own personality attributes motivated the inclusion of a competency related to self-awareness, or to **the ability to think about oneself within a cultural context**. This general competency includes the abilities to appreciate that one's own way of viewing the world is a result of own unique background, personal history, and culture, to recognize that people with different backgrounds view the world differently, and to continually seek to understand how they themselves and the U.S. in general are viewed by members of other cultures.

4.2 Model Structure

We organized the identified competencies into 4 broad competency areas, mainly:

1. Diplomatic Stance
2. Cultural Learning
3. Cultural Reasoning
4. Intercultural Interaction

As shown in Table 7, three specific competencies are associated with each of these domains.

Table 7. *Competencies Associated with Each Domain*

1.0 Diplomatic Stance	2.0 Cultural Learning
1.1 Maintaining a Mission Orientation 1.2 Understanding Self in Cultural Context 1.3 Managing Attitudes Towards Culture	2.1 Self-Directed Learning of Cultures 2.2 Developing Reliable Information Sources 2.3 Learning New Cultures Efficiently
3.0 Cultural Reasoning	4.0 Intercultural Interaction
3.1 Coping with Cultural Surprises 3.2 Developing Cultural Explanations of Behavior 3.3 Cultural Perspective Taking	4.1 Cross-Cultural Communication Planning 4.2 Disciplined Self-Presentation 4.3 Reflection and Feedback

Detailed definitions of each competency are given in Appendix VI, along with examples.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Acting and engaging effectively within a variety of different cultures present a significant challenge. None of the warfighters we interviewed for this study thought it was easy. In fact, here is a short list of the challenges they encountered:

- Cultural rules differ subtly from region to region so that so that every place you go there are nuances to be learned
- Cultures change over time; even when you come back to the same place sometimes people behave differently and many things may have changed
- People make exceptions to their cultural rules and customs because they understand culture too; they know Americans operate (and often understand our culture better than we understand their culture)
- Individual members of a culture don't always follow their own cultural rules

See the following testimonials from a few of the interviewees:

We were basically going in with the assumption that the important thing is to know the tribal elders, to talk to the tribal elders because they have the influence. But, in reality, the tribal elders really had… it wasn't the tribal elders, because that is a carryover from Iraq, that was not true in Afghanistan... (Marine Corps Colonel)

*That was another thing that surprised me. In all the cultural classes there's a big like, "how's your family?" You don't get to business right away, this isn't America, in America you get right down to business, and here you have to soften them up. It was quite the opposite; I mean **it couldn't be more wrong. They treated you like a business partner** and, eventually, would treat you like a friend. So before, when they didn't know you, like this guy didn't know me, it was very much "here's what I want to talk to you about." I mean that's it, it came right up front. Now, eventually, when you gained a relationship with these people, THEN they'll say, "how are things? Do you have a wife?"* (Marine Corps Major)

*Right, which is ironic because, again, you can go anywhere and you'd see the soles of the feet, you know what I mean, **it's like every norm that I was told was broken** in some capacity, by an Afghan.* (Marine Corps Captain)

Attaining a level of cross-cultural expertise certainly requires work and a fair amount of dedicated attention. At the same time, we were struck by relative straightforwardness and practical nature of the strategies the interviewees had developed over time to deal with complexity—by "doing a lot with a little" cultural knowledge, "rolling with" changes in their environments, and "learning on the fly" in order to get up to speed quickly. We endeavored to include in the model of 3C that we developed, competencies supported by similarly straightforward practices and mental strategies that can be adopted and practiced, by anyone, at any level of military command.

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APPENDIX I. INTERVIEWEE TABLE

#	Rank	Service	Gender	MOS	Deployments	Duration	Job In Country	Languages Spoken (time in lang. school)
1	General	MC	M	1. Infantry 2. Civil Affairs	Vietnam (67-68 &70-71) Phillipines (88) Okinawa (87-89) Turkey (91) Frmr Soviet Union (early 90s) Somalia (92-93 & 95) Kenya (late 90s) Persian Gulf (late 90s) Iraq (late 90s)	2YRS 6MS 2YRS 6MS 1YR	Civil Affairs in Viet Nam; most recently CINC at CENTCOM	Fluent in Italian
2	Col	MC	M	1. Infantry (0302) 2. Civil Affairs	Phillipines (88) Liberia (90s) Iraq, Liberia, Albania on ship (01) Iraq (04-05) AFG (08-09)	6MS 6MS 7MS 1YR 1YR	Civil Affairs Detachment Commander in Iraq & Afghanistan	
3	Col	MC	M	1. Infantry (0302) 2. Civil Affairs	Philippines & Thailand (<03) Iraq [03-04] Okinawa/Italy/Thailand/Singapore/ Panama/Peru/Liberia on ship (05-07) Djibouti (current) Germany (current)	6MS 1YR 2YRS 6MS 6MS	Civil Affairs in Iraq; JAG in Djibouti	
4	LtCol	MC	M	1. Engineer	Somalia (92-93) Thailand/Philipines/Japan/Europe/ Latin America (93-06) Okinawa (06-08) AFG (07-08)	9MS 6YRS 1YR 9MS	Advisor in AFG	
5	LtCol	MC	M	1. Intelligence 2. Weapons training	Lebanon (<80) Okinawa (88-89) Saudi Arabia (90) Somalia (93) Iraq (03)	16YRS 1YR 7MS 6MS 5MS	Human intelligence gathering in Iraq and Somalia	
6	LTC	Army	M	1. Infantry 2. Intelligence 3. Information Operations	Kosovo (04) Iraq (05) AFG (09-10)	9MS 1YR 1YR	Trained AFG I/O Officers	

#	Rank	Service	Gender	MOS	Deployments	Duration	Job In Country	Languages Spoken (time in lang. school)
7	Major	Army	M	1. Infantry 2. Intelligence	Panama Haiti (95) Korea (96-99) Columbia (04-05) Iraq (06-07)	6MS 6MS 3YRS 1YR 1YR	Human intelligence gathering in Iraq	
8	Major	MC	M	1. Communications 2. Civil Affairs	Okinawa 1YR (91-92) Israel, N. Africa, Kenya on ship (94) Bahrain, Qatar, Yemen on ship (96) AFG (09-10)	1YR 6MS 6MS 1YR	Civil Affairs in AFG	
9	Major	MC	M	1. Air Command (7202) 2. JAG (4402) 3. Civil Affairs (0530)	Iraq (08-09) AFG (09-10)	7MS 1YR	Advisor in AFG	
10	Major	AF	M	1. Logistics	Iraq (05) AFG (06-07)	6MS 1YR	Logistics Support in Iraq Logistics mentor in AFG	
11	Major	Army	F	1. Military Police	Kuwait (01) Iraq (03-04) AFG (07-08) AFG (09-10)	6MS 1YR 15MS 1YR	On a planning staff in AFG interfacing with AFG military counterparts	
12	Major	Army	M	1. Aviation (15B)	Korea (99-01) Iraq (03) Iraq (04) AFG (08-09)	2.5YRS 6MS 6MS 1YR	Supply officer, Iraq; aviation planner AFG (planning with AFG counterparts)	
13	Major	MC	M	1. MAGTF Intel (0202)	Iraq (04-05) Iraq (06-07)	1YR 1YR	Advisor in Iraq	

#	Rank	Service	Gender	MOS	Deployments	Duration	Job In Country	Languages Spoken (time in lang. school)
14	Captain	MC	F	1. Air Support Control Officer 2. Civil Affairs	Iraq (05-06) Iraq (06-07) AFG (09-10)	6MS 6MS 1YR	Civil Affairs in AFG (Female Engagement Team)	
15	Captain	Army	M	1. Medical Service Transport	Iraq (04-05) AFG (08-09)	1YR 1YR	Medical transport; organized own HA missions	
16	Captain	AF	M	1. Cryptological Linguist (1N3)	Riyad, Saudi Arabia (94) Riyad, Saudi Arabia (96) England (personal, 99-03) AFG (07-08)	4MS 4MS 4YRS 1YR	Human intelligence gathering in AFG	1YR Arabic (1991) & 1YR Pashto (2004) training at DLI
17	MSgt (E8)	Army	F	1. Human Intelligence	Germany (80-84 and 88-91) Iraq (08-09)	7YRS 1YR	Human intelligence gathering	
18	MSgt (E8)	MC	F	1. Engineer Equipment Maintenance 2. Marksmanship Instructor 3. Civil Affairs	Iraq (06-07) AFG (09-10)	1YR 8MS	Civil Affairs in AFG (Female Engagement Team)	
19	SFC (E7)	Army	F	1. Human Intelligence	Germany (78-83) Germany (87-90) Iraq (05) Iraq (08)	5YRS 3YRS 8MS 6MS	Human intelligence gathering in Iraq	1YR Chinese (1974) & 1YR Polish (1977) at DLI
20	Ssgt (E6)	Army	M	1. Communications 2. Human Intelligence	Saudi Arabia (96) AFG (04) Iraq (08-10)	6MS 1YR 15MS		Speaks French and a little Arabic

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Cross-Cultural Competency Model (3CM)

CTA Interview Guide

Interview Objectives:

Uncover cross-cultural competencies in an open ended way—without giving away the competency, without having the interviewee reflect on their own cognitive processes.

Intro/Who We Are: We're working on a project that is taking a close look at some of the **human challenges that arise in the context of operating in foreign environments**. The goal of our project is to provide the DoD with recommendations about how they can better prepare US forces for managing that emerging aspect of military engagements.

We know that there are a lot of folks out there who want to learn from your experiences. We've heard from other Marines and soldiers we've talked to that there are a lot of surveys floating around out there. The way we are going to do this interview today may be a little bit different from some of the interviews you've participated in in the past.

We have quite a few questions we want to ask you. But we don't have a set list that we have to get through. The exact questions we will ask you are going to depend on what you tell us. You will see what I mean when we get started. Here's what we're going to do…

We want to spend the first few minutes of the interview talking a little bit about your background. Then we will ask you to tell us about your experiences abroad. We will first give you some idea about the kinds of experiences that we're interested in—and then we will probably spend most of this interview just talking about one very significant experience you had—one that made a deep impression on you. At the end of the interview we will talk a little more generally about your experiences and what you've learned.

This interview will be approximately **2 hours long**.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, you can stop the interview at any time, decline to answer specific questions with no negative repercussions.

This project and these interviews are at an **unclassified level**. We will remind you of this throughout, but we rely on you to not reveal sensitive or classified information.

Can we have your permission to audio record the interview? You can decline this request with no negative repercussions whatsoever, or you may choose to have the recording stopped at any time during the interview. The audio recordings, transcripts and raw interview notes will not be shared outside the interview team and the project sponsors.

Do you have questions before we begin the interview?

Background Information

ASK	Tell us a bit about who you are and your deployments/tours abroad: How long were you there? What sorts of tasks were you responsible for? In the course of your work in COUNTRY X, what was the level of interaction you had with locals/partnered forces? (Every day, every week, occasionally, etc). Did you have opportunities to socialize with NATIVES outside of your operational duties? Get a sense of who they have working for them/with them: U.S., locals, coalition, other…were they commanding others?

Incident Identification and Selection

ASK	Can you tell me about a time, in COUNTRY X, when you interacted with members of the local populace (civilians, tribal leaders, local officials, partnered forces etc), coalition partners or third country nationals and <u>found the interaction particularly challenging</u>? It should be a time when your involvement made a critical difference in the outcome of the situation (you made decisions that changed the outcome, or you shaped the interaction in a way that made a difference in the outcome.) - This might be the sort of event where…you had to 'think on your feet'. …you thought the interaction went well, and then were surprised later on by some of the longer-term consequences? (maybe it was an unexpected civilian reaction) …you expected a certain outcome, and were surprised by how events unfolded? …you had a hard time understanding the NATIVE'S (or group of NATIVES') point of view? …you seemed to be interpreting the situation differently from the way the NATIVES were interpreting it?
LISTEN FOR	An incident that fits study goals, in which participant played a key role. Could include *difficulty understanding actions or decisions of the natives with whom they interacted, challenges relating to cooperating/collaborating, negotiating, etc.*

Timeline Verification Information	
ASK	Will you give me a quick run through of the incident? What happened?

When did it happen? How long had you been in COUNTRY X at that point?

How long was this incident—from when it started until it was resolved?

What was your mission at the time? What were you there to do, and why?

What was your role in the incident?

Who were the key players?

How did you communicate with them? (Through interpreter/ directly, through email, phone, etc). |
| **LISTEN FOR** | Decision points, surprises, points of confusion, shifts in situation assessment/understanding, conceptual leaps, anomalies/violated expectancies, ambiguous cues |
| **FLAGS** | I just knew… It felt right… I guessed… Something felt wrong… I've seen it before… It depends… |

Deepening Information	

Objectives: Understand the knowledge, skills, and motivational factors that underlie performance within intercultural situations.

Instruction: As interviewee describes the challenging components of the incident and their decisions/actions, listen for the nine competency areas. Select the competency areas that appear most critical to supporting performance within this specific context and use competency area-specific deepening probes to elicit more detailed information around these (as many as there is time for).

ASK	What was it about the interaction that was challenging?

How did you address this challenge?

What actions did you take (or, if the actions have already been described, list them out) – did you consider any other actions?

What was it about this situation that suggested the particular course of action you chose?

What happened when you tried to address the challenge? Was it resolved? |

	If no, what got in the way?
LISTEN FOR	Cultural facts / theories
	Adapt how expressing oneself (chameleon, or intentionally keeping own expression style)
	Knowledge of language
	Confusion/surprises
	Seeing events as another sees them
	Control of emotional responses
	Attitude about the culture
	Withholding moral judgment
	Self efficacy in the interactions
Cultural Facts/ Theories	How did knowing Fact X help you resolve this situation?
	Tell me more about FACT X in COUNTRY X?
	How did you come to know this fact?
	In this situation, were there other explanations, other facts that might apply?
	Have you been in other situations where it was useful to know Fact X?
Adapt how expressing oneself	What did you try to communicate?
	How did you know that was the right thing to say?
	How did you communicate it?
	How did you know that was the right way to communicate it?
Knowledge of language	Did knowledge of the language make a difference in this incident?
	What did your knowledge of the language help you **communicate** that you otherwise wouldn't have?
	What did your knowledge of the language help you **understand** that you otherwise wouldn't have?
	How do you think this situation would have unfolded differently if

	someone with poorer language skills had been in your place?
Confusion/surprises	Did you know right away what was going on or did it take you a while to figure it out? What was it about the situation that let you determine what was happening? Was there anything about the NATIVE'S actions/decisions that surprised you? How was it different than what you expected? What aspects of the situation (their behavior) were you paying attention to? *How did you know to pay attention to that?* How were you interpreting their behavior? Why do you think they did that? …Made the decisions they made? *How did you know that?* Did you talk to anybody about this after it happened (outside the debrief)? Superior, other team members, interpreter.
Seeing events as another sees them	What do you think they were paying attention to and thinking about during this event? *How do you think they were interpreting your actions?* *How would they have explained this event?* What do you think their goals were? What was most important for them in this incident? *Why was that important to them?* Did that help you decide how to address the situation?
Control of emotional responses	When this happened… how did you react? Were you—mad, sad, glad, scared? How did you express that? *Is that would normally do?* Did it matter that you did/didn't react a certain way? *Would this situation have turned out differently?*

	Do you think the NATIVE could tell how you were feeling? *If yes, what makes you think they could tell?* *If not, were you deliberately trying to disguise how you felt? If so, how did you do that?*
Attitude about the culture	What do you like about COUNTRY X and the people who live there? What are some things you dislike about COUNTRY X and the people who live there? This kind of thing seems a little beyond the pale for the US. What did you think about that? How did you react?
Withholding moral judgment	Did you think the NATIVE'S reactions were justified? Do you think in this situation there's a clear right and wrong?
Self-efficacy in the interactions	Did you feel adequately prepared for this kind of situation? At any point during the incident, did you wish there was someone else there with you who had more experience with the culture? Maybe you felt they would have known what to do right away.

Mission Success Information

Objectives: Understand how this specific incident fit with their immediate or longer term mission objectives—and the extent to which they believe the outcome of the incident supported these objectives.

ASK	How do you believe this interaction affected your mission objectives? *Did you meet your immediate objectives?* *Did you accomplish longer term goals?* *Did you establish future relationships/ set the stage for future interactions/ influence their perceptions?* Did you conduct a debrief at the time? If so, what were the conclusions?

What If

Objectives: *Understand the extent to which they think about culture in an abstract sense.*	
ASK	Did you learn anything from this experience? If so, what?
	In hindsight, knowing what you know now….would you have done anything differently?
	This event happened to you in COUNTRY X. How would this have played out differently in COUNTRY Y?
	Could it have happened in COUNTRY Y?
	Why/why not?
	If so, would you do anything differently in COUNTRY Y?
	If yes, what would you do?
	How would you know to do it that way?

Preparation

Objectives: *Understand how they think about preparing for intercultural interactions. Do they think preparation is important? How do they do it? What is it that is important to know: culture-specific factual knowledge, cross-cultural theories, etc.*

ASK	Do you know where your next deployment/assignment is going to be?
	IF NO:
	Let's assume you've just found out where you're going next, and it's somewhere you've never been.
	IF YES:
	What are you doing now to help you prepare?
	Are you studying up? If so:
	What kind of information?

	Why is that important?
	How does that help you?
	Where do you get the information?
	What have you learned from your past deployments that you think will be helpful in where you're headed next?

Referrals

ASK	Some people who have been on multiple deployments may develop certain skills that help them no matter where they are deployed next.
	Do you think thank is true?
	Is that true for you?
	If yes, give me an example.
	Can you think of one person who you would really like to have with you next time you encounter a tough situation like the one you described today?
	Why would you choose that person?
	What is it that they are really good at?
	How would you describe what it is that sets them apart?
	Do you think we might contact them?

APPENDIX III. SAMPLE CRITICAL INCIDENTS

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Incident 1 AFG: Dead Man Walking

U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Markman was serving in Afghanistan as an advisor to the Commander of an Afghan National Army unit. As an advisor, one aspect of his job was to teach the Afghan army to be protective of the rule of law that comes from the Afghan central government. Throughout his tour, LtCol. Markman accompanied the unit on regular patrols to local villages. On these patrols, the Afghan soldiers would talk to the locals, and LtCol. Markman and his counterpart, an Afghan LTC, would try to meet with some of the local leaders to check in on how they were doing and to see if there was anything they could help them with.

On one particular day, they were talking to a village elder that they hadn't met before. Their most important objective for the meeting was just to make their presence in the area known. They exchanged the typical salutations, "how are you doing? Is there anything we can do for you?" As they were asking these questions they would also ask and try to get a feel as to whether the locals have been seeing any bad guys. As they were talking to the elder, Markman saw a man sitting down off to the side with several local men sitting around him, brandishing weapons. It looked like he was being detained so Markman asked the elder if he was Taliban. The elder said, "No, no, this guy is a criminal, he stole from us." Markman inquired "who did he steal from?" and the elder explained that he had stolen from the village. "What are you going to do with him?" Markman asked. Even though the leader was not specific about what would happen to the man, Markman sensed the villagers were going to make swift justice.

Based on his understanding of Pashtunwali, Markman was sure the villagers would execute the man. He knew that the villagers adhered to this tribal code some of the central aspects of which are revenge and honor. According to the Pashtunwali code if a man feels offended he can take revenge to safeguard his honor. While Markman understood why the villagers operated that way, he did not feel that capital punishment was something that the US or the Afghan National Army forces could be associated with outside the State system. If the villagers did any kind of physical harm to the man it would have undermined their effort to build a democratically stable society with a strong central government where a rule of law and good governance prevails.

The message Markman wanted to get across was 'follow the rule of law, if you find someone who has done something wrong, take it to the police. The police then take them to the Courts who will determine the punishment.' At the same time, Markman wanted to resolve the situation amicably and peacefully. He understood that he could not respond in a knee-jerk reaction; he needed to try to see things through their eyes, and communicate to them in a language and manner that would resonate with them.

One of the things Markman remembered from his training on Afghanistan was that members of the Afghan culture value indirect forms of speech, and because they are a warrior-like culture they also fancy poetic language. So he said to the elder, "I see you are a great protector of your village. In my country, too, my father cares about his household. If my father found someone stealing from him, he would be concerned." Markman noticed that

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the elder was nodding his head. Encouraged by this, he continued, "A man of justice is also a man of compassion." At this point the elder interrupted, "But this man must be held accountable, he must receive punishment." Markman thought about this and said, "Well, in my country there are many forms of punishment. In America, we too have execution and it is determined by the courts, and we have police who bring the criminals there. And in Afghanistan you, too, have courts, you too, have police." Markman continued, "A tree that is cut down will no longer bear fruit…" The local leader said, "Hmm, what a wise man. Maybe we'll keep this criminal in this life and maybe he can be of value later on."

Markman and his unit left the meeting soon after. When they checked back later they found that the man had not been beaten and he hadn't been executed. Markman felt that he had succeeded in achieving all his objectives. He had given all the stake-holders a face-saving way out–the Afghan army looked like they were responsible actors, protecting the interests of the government. The local elder, in his mind and in the eyes of the locals, it appeared that he was in charge because he made the decision on his own to spare the man's life.

Incident 2 AFG: Growing Weeds

Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel McClelland was serving as an advisor to the Commander of an Afghan National Army unit. The commander of the Afghan unit whom LtCol McClelland was working with most closely was Colonel Faizal. A recurring issue between McClelland and Faizal had been the hygiene in the living quarters, the importance of taking out the trash, so diseases and rats don't spread, and the general appearance of the grounds surrounding the living areas. Three weeks had gone by since McClelland and Faizal first discussed the issue of landscaping, then a month went by. When six weeks had gone by and Faizal still hadn't made arrangements for the grass to be cut, LtCol McClelland called COL Faizal. With the assistance of his interpreter, McClelland explained, "COL Faizal, the last six weeks…the only growth I've seen in your battalion in the last six weeks are the weeds around your building. " Within 10 minutes after the meeting, COL Faizal had his people cutting the grass.

Incident 3 AFG: This man is a Jerk!

Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Landon was deployed to Afghanistan to serve as an advisor to the Commander of an Afghan National Army unit. After a few days in Kabul he was transported to the Kandak where the Afghan unit was stationed. Here he met the Afghan Battalion commander for the first time. After brief introductions, the Afghan commander showed Landon to a large room where he would meet the rest of the Afghan battalion leadership and staff for the first time. This introductory meeting officially marked the replacement of the U.S. LTCOL and Army National Guard team who had been working with the unit prior.

In the room were a dozen officers of the battalion scattered about, all Afghans, some sitting and some standing. One at a time they each greeted Landon, made a few comments

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and praised Allah. Landon's interpreter was making sure he was apprised of everything that was said, whispering their comments into his ear. It got to this one Afghan officer who hadn't yet been introduced. Markman's interpreter whispered to him that this was the unit's religious officer. The religious officer stood up and like the others first said, "Praise be to Allah…" and then he pointed his finger at Landon and exclaimed, "This man is a jerk."

Landon was surprised and taken aback. He thought to himself, "Here I am, leaving my family behind; I don't need to take this crap…" He wanted to say, "Hey buckaroo, I'm here to help you guys, you're not doing anything for me here." But he kept that in and did his best not to display his reaction. He knew that in order to be effective he could never show that he had lost his temper. Instead, he had to consistently remain calm, cool, and collected under any circumstance. He knew that if he was perceived by the Afghans in that moment to come unglued, they would probably think that he couldn't control his emotions. So he wanted to show them that not only could he remain cool but he could turn the situation around and be in control. He thought the best way to do that was to try to be humorous without looking crazy.

So, he stood there, looked stoic, cracked a little grin and said, "Clearly you are a wise man. For my wife, too, thinks I'm a jerk." The Afghans broke out in a cacophony of laughter.

Landon was convinced that the officer was trying to test him on the one hand, see how he would react to the insult. And on the other he was trying to self-aggrandize; to show Landon that he wasn't going to budge, the he was the voice of the battalion as the Religious Officer. After the initial meeting Landon went on to develop a relationship with the religious officer, who ended up becoming his biggest advocate through the whole deployment.

Incident 4 AFG: The Humanitarian Assistance Mission

U.S. Army Captain Swift was assigned as a mentor to an Afghan National Army company commander, Major Kohistani. Three months into Swift's deployment the unit was tasked with planning and executing a humanitarian assistance operation, delivering supplies to a school in one of the villages in the area. Their first task was to pick a village and school. Swift immediately suggested a small village very close to their base.

Swift had gotten to know Kohistani over the past three months through day-to-day interaction and had developed the impression that he was a really good guy. But because of the general circumstances they were in Swift was still watchful around him. When Swift suggested the school that was no more than two blocks away, Kohistani immediately responded, "oh sir, you should visit a school in my village." Kohistani's village was several miles away in a very active area with lots of people and traffic. This caused Swift some concern.

"I'd like to find a school that hasn't been visited by coalition forces before," Swift explained. "Well, the village close by is nice, but it's been visited quite a bit," Kohistani quickly retorted. "Would the people in your village be appreciative?" Swift asked and Kohistani confirmed that they would.

Swift was reluctant. The nearby village would be a very short, relatively pain-free mission logistics-wise. It would require only three or four vehicles and one or two gun

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trucks. Kohistani's village was 45 minutes away which would mean much more period of exposure and the need for more firepower. Also, the nearby school had about 200-300 students; Kohistani's village had 1,200. Swift shared his concern with Kohistani, "we're not going to have enough supplies for so many students." To which Kohistani responded, "Maybe we can just visit the girls who come in in the morning."

Swift was eager to visit a village that had not been visited before, though, and the fact that the school was indeed a girls' school did make it a strategically attractive recipient. He was therefore persuaded that they should at least have a look at Kohistani's village. Swift and Kohistani visited the school and met with the headmaster; Kohistani wearing a civilian white robe instead of his uniform. After the visit, Swift was convinced they could pull off a visit without compromising security.

Three months later, after careful planning and preparation, the unit arrived at the school early in the morning to set up before the students started coming in. A camera crew from a local news station was covering the event. The unit had brought with them close to 700 backpacks full of school supplies leaving more than enough for the number of students who attended school in the morning. They started handing out the supplies and the girls were coming through and things were going smoothly. But the process was taking time and as they get close to midday the second shift of children started streaming in. Swift quickly saw that they were all boys. As they filled up the classrooms the boys gathered by the windows, obviously curious about what was happening in the schoolyard.

After the girls had all received backpacks they still had several hundred left. The schoolmaster came over and asked, "what about the boys?" Swift looked up at the little faces in the windows. "What now?" he thought to himself. The schoolmaster then suggested, "Well, why don't you leave the rest of the supplies with us, put it in this room and we'll give it to the students?" Swift, relieved to have solution to the problem that did not require them to stay at the school longer than they had planned, quickly agreed.

As they were unloading the bags one of the teachers, came up to Swift, "you probably should deliver it now." "Why?" Swift asked, and she explained, "If you leave, those boys are not going to get those supplies."

Swift was taken aback. It had never entered his mind that the schoolmaster might give the supplies as preferential treatment to somebody else and not to the boys the team intended them for. He was immediately tempted to just distribute the rest of the supplies right then; the purpose of the mission was to create a positive environment and he didn't want any kind of tension or any kind residual negative effects. But, they only had enough supplies for about half of the boys. That was when the German ISAF officer who had accompanied them spoke up and suggested that they could come back and finish the job. Whoever didn't receive supplies on this mission, they would take care of. That did it. Swift said "all right, let's do it. We're going to deliver to the boys, too." The schoolmaster immediately piped up, "What was wrong with my idea?" Swift said, "Yours is a good idea. But we have time to distribute it after all." The schoolmaster seemed satisfied with this and continued to help pass out the supplies.

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Incident 5 AFG: I Wish You Had Gotten a Better Tent

U.S. Army Captain Lassiter was assigned as a mentor to an Afghan company commander. Lassiter had been working with the Afghan officer, Wahidi, for several months and the two had developed a friendly relationship with a great deal of mutual respect. The two frequently discussed political matters and often shared stories about their families. As part of planning and preparing for a field exercise, Lassiter and Wahidi discussed the unit's state of supplies. They both agreed that more tents were needed. Wahidi suggested that two or three sleep tents would suffice. Procuring the tents would be a straightforward matter as the unit had Field Ordering Officer (FOO) money to dispose over. Wahidi then proposed that he knew a place where they would get some tents. Lassiter's job as an advisor is to teach the commander and his unit to be self-sufficient, so he replies that that's great.

Two days later Wahidi comes by to show Lassiter the tents he has procured. Lassiter looks at the tents and says "I wasn't expecting this kind of a tent. You're going to have them sleep in that?" Lassiter points to the open ends at the bottom of each tent. "Oh my soldiers will be fine," Wahidi responds. Lassiter says, "They're kind of a shady quality." But Wahidi holds his ground. "Oh no, that's good quality, that's good quality material," he maintains. For the first time Lassiter questions Wahidi's character.

Lassiter thought there was a possibility that Wahidi had bought the cheaper tents in order to skim money. But, he also felt there were other things that could have come into play. It was possible that there was an aura of machismo and Wahidi really did think the tents were good enough for the men to sleep in. Lassiter also knew that it was possible that Wahidi had bought the tents from a friend he was trying to help financially. So, although Lassiter had a funny feeling he went ahead and approved the tents. But, he vowed to next time have Wahidi get a couple of different cost estimates before making a purchases. Lassiter continued to develop a good relationship with Wahidi and never saw any other evidence of dishonest behavior.

Incident 6 AFG: The Salon Pass

U.S. Army Captain Jones was assigned as a mentor to an Afghan company commander. During his yearlong deployment the unit had a mission to transport vehicles, MRAPs, from Kabul back to their home base through the Hindu Kush Mountains. The Afghan commander, Azizi, was in charge of the mission. To prepare for the mission, the unit first went to Kabul where they spent 2-3 days taking a class on the new vehicles. After the class they took six of the vehicles and set out on the drive back to the base. It was going to be a 20 hour trip, through the mountains. The trip included the long Salon Pass which, at one time was the highest tunnel in the world. The unit would have to go through the pass to make it to the highest point in the Hindu Kush. It was commonly known that the drive through the Pass could be treacherous due to the low temperatures and high winds.

Jones found the drive through the mountains to be phenomenal; there was a beautiful view of the Afghan countryside. When they were almost to the beginning of the Salon Pass, they spotted a village. They decided to take a restroom break, and buy some Naan (bread) and berries from the locals.

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Following along with the convoy of MRAPs are a large number of Afghan National Army semis and jingle trucks, as the U.S. soldiers would call them. These were trucks filled with other supplies and personal belongings of the Afghan soldiers—so filled that items were tied to the outside. These would move around and make noise as the trucks moved, hence the name jingle trucks.

As they all prepared to leave the small village, Jones and Azizi walked around to ask all the truck drivers if they are ready—and most importantly if they had their tire chains. There had been an avalanche in the Pass the night before and ten people had been killed. All the drivers confirmed they had their chains and were ready. As they started driving up to the Pass the snow began falling. Soon the big vehicles were weaving and between the military convoy and all the civilian vehicles that were making their way up, the road was littered with vehicles. Azizi and Jones decided it was time to stop and have everyone put their tire chains on.

This was when they discovered that three or four of the truck drivers didn't have tire chains after all. At this point they were 3/4s of the way up to the tunnel entrance and Jones was starting to get nervous. He realized they had no idea how big the storm was that was coming towards them and they couldn't spin all the large vehicles around. One of the drivers suggested that they used tow ropes to pull the stranded vehicles. Jones and Azizi agreed and decided that they should all just shoot for the tunnel entrance, and wait there for everybody else to get caught up.

At the top, at the entrance to the Salon Pass was a little element of Afghans, about 9 of them in a little shack with a woodburning stove. Their whole purpose was to kind of keep the steady flow of traffic through the pass, in the tunnel. By the shack was a little area where they all were able pull off to the side and get out. At this point they were all running very low on fuel. Jones' vehicle only had 1/4 of a tank left.

As they were waiting Azizi told Jones that there was a village on the other side of the pass where they might be able to get some fuel. A few hours later, only half of their convoy has made it to the entrance. After some discussion they agree that to push forward to the village so they can start looking for fuel. Jones and Azizi drove up to the village and started knocking on doors. They tried several doors and nobody seemed to have any diesel. Jones was getting weary at this point and said to Azizi "you're asking them if we can buy their diesel, right? "Oh?! No, I was just asking them if they had some petrol" he said. When Azizi went back and asked again, some of the villagers did indeed have diesel and agreed to sell it at a considerable price.

Since everyone in the convoy was getting low on fuel they had to ration it. Jones and Azizi put some in their own vehicles and Azizi set the rest aside next to his vehicle for those still making their way up. When the rest of the convoy finally arrived Jones and Azizi who had been staying warm inside the vehicle hopped out. They immediately saw that the remaining fuel was gone. They both knew the only way it could have happened was that one of the villagers had come out to retrieve it. Jones was convinced that the man who sold the fuel to them took it back. When they set it outside their vehicles he must have thought that they didn't need it after all.

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Incident 7 AFG: When are you coming to my village?

U.S. Air Force Captain Lopez was deployed as an intelligence specialist with a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan. Over the past several months the team had stopped in several villages to provide humanitarian aid in the form of food, medical care and veterinarian engagements. The choices as to which villages would be visited were made haphazard.

One day the unit stopped in a village for the day and brought with them carpets for the mosque, set up one area for people to get medical treatment, and another to provide veterinarian care. Towards the end of the day Captain Lopez found himself sitting in what looked to be a sitting area talking to some of the older residents in the village. It was a fairly small group of villagers compared to other gatherings Lopez had encountered, about 100 people at the most. He asked them about the lay of the land and who lived where, the tribal structure, their families, when they would interact with outsiders and why, and whether they were sharing resources. Lopez wanted to understand how each village was linked to the other, were they bound by family or were they sharing resources, or something else entirely.

After Lopez had been sitting there for several hours an older gentleman came up and joined the group. The man just kind of plopped down and said 'hello,' and Lopez didn't give it a second thought. When Lopez had finished his conversations and the team had packing everything up the older man leaned forward and said, "When are you coming to my village?" Lopez hadn't even considered that he wasn't from this village. So he asked him, "Where do you live?" The man turned and pointed over a hill. A short distance away Lopez spotted a gathering of houses, no more than 300 yards away. "You see that tree over there…" the man said, "When are you guys coming to my village?" Lopez explained the situation to the man, he said, "We're not. We were only stopping here and then we're moving forward to another place tomorrow." The man got visibly upset. He said, "Well we need help, too! Why are you helping them? We have people who are sick; we have animals that need care. We want this too!"

When the unit returned to the forward operating base several weeks later, Lopez happened to sit in on a meeting with the local district commissioner in the area. He had already heard by the time the unit got back, that there was favoritism being shown; that some villages got help and others didn't. The district commissioner said, "I want to offer you a plan. The next time you do something like that, bring your goods to me, tell me when you're going to do it, and bring your goods to me." His plan was to call upon all the village elders in his area and involve them in the decisions about how supplies should be distributed. Lopez felt that this was a good idea and recommended that they should go out on a limb and trust the guy.

The strategy worked out very well. The district commissioner would ask the elders to provide him with a list of the three to five neediest families in their village. That way the elders would be responsible for giving the supplies to those people who they had identified. This way he transferred the onus of responsibility to the village elder, and then it was the village elder's responsibility to take care of his people. And, because the names were brought back to the district commissioner he could take a copy of the list and that was his accountability. That made it possible for him to go and check that the supplies went where

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they were supposed to. That way, he was able to bring accountability to a system that previously had no accountability.

When Lopez visited him three or four months later he commented that, "there are more people coming to see me." Now the local people came to him for problem resolutions rather than trying to fix them among themselves and then squabbling and fighting. They would bring problems to him to solve, whereas before that didn't happen. Putting him at the center of the distributions helped him become the center of gravity for people in the area. And, that in turn helped solidify the relationship between the U.S. PRT and him.

Incident 8 AFG: The Superhero in Disguise

U.S. Air Force Captain Munez was deployed as an intelligence specialist with a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan. Over the course of a several month long mission, the team stopped in several villages in the area surrounding their base of operations to provide humanitarian aid. In one particular village the team spent more time than usual, an entire week. This was a small village in which the team was tasked with rebuilding an American outpost that had been attacked and destroyed. There was a very small market area in the village and Munez spent most afternoons there speaking with the locals. Munez noticed an older man at the market every day that seemed to be avoiding talking to him. One afternoon Munez approached him and the two ended up sitting on the side of the street, propped up against the building, having some tea, and talking to each other.

Munez knew that it was rare for Afghans to become as old as this man appeared to be. He pointed to the man's beard and said, "You're a very wise man, how did you get to be so old and wise?" The man's eyes widened and he said, "Well let's talk about that." Excitedly the man told Munez about his life and his battles against the Russians when he was younger. He said that he was a mujahidin when the Russians came and that he was part of this little elite bandit unit that when people needed help he would go. He had put together a small team of village men who would go out at night to destroy the Russian forces and do recon on the damage to their village. But, he said, no one knew that, to everybody else he was just a poor, helpless Afghan who was here to serve. During the day he would go back to farming his land, tending his herd and pretend to know little about fighting. But, at night, it was a totally different story, he put on the super hero outfit and everybody knew, in the village, that he was part of this unit, and he would go off and do these things. But, during the day, you couldn't have paid anybody in the village to reveal that. Munez had heard and read a great deal about the Afghan warrior spirit and to him this didn't quite mesh.

Munez asked the old man why he was being secretive. "When you think something is dead, you don't continue to kick it," the man explained. Munez realized that this was in fact a clever strategy: If the enemy thinks that you're dumb then why would they continue to waste their time with you. Over the course of his deployment he spent a great deal of time reading Afghan folklore and even got a hold of a collection of Afghan fables. He noticed that many of them described this notion of the Afghan as being successful by outsmarting the enemy by playing dumb. He realized that the way Americans think about what it means to be a warrior and a 'hero' was different than how Afghans think about those things.

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Incident 9 AFG: The Night Letters

U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Cirincione was serving as battalion commander in Afghanistan. Halfway into his deployment his battalion takes on responsibility of a new area and Cirincione accompanied a unit on a first time patrol of a key village in the area. This was their first attempt at engaging with this village the inhabitants of which they had learned were very shy of outsiders. Their main objectives were to get to know the people and to get a sense of the Taliban's foothold in the area.

As was standard practice, Cirincione went to the mosque first where he met the local Mullah. The Mullah was friendly and seemed forthcoming when Cirincione asked him general questions about the village and its inhabitants. But, as soon as he started asking about the Taliban's presence in the area, the Mullah said, "We can't talk about that because the Taliban will give us death threats." Cirincione tried to reassure the Mullah, "Well, we're in this area now, we're here to stay, and we're going to protect you." The Mullah nodded but still appeared distraught and revealed that the village had received night letters from the Taliban.

Cirincione was familiar with the night letters the Taliban would post to intimidate people in these small communities and to ensure that they didn't cooperate with the U.S. or international forces. The Taliban would post these letters on the doors of mosques and the Mullahs read it out to all the men who came to the mosque and they in turn would go home and tell their families. It was called a night letter because the Taliban always posted them in the middle of the night.

Because part of his objective was to learn more about the Taliban's influence in the area, Cirincione was very interested in the specific nature of the intimidation. So he asked the Mullah, "When was the last time you received a night letter?" Cirincione's interpreter relayed the message, "He said it was a short time ago." Cirincione got excited by this. If there had been Taliban activity in the area recently, this was very important information to have. By asking the Mullah to count the number of crop cycles that had transpired since the village received the last night letter Cirincione worked out that it was between two and three years ago.

Before going to Afghanistan, Cirincione had heard that Afghans don't have the same concept of time as people do in the West. But, he was still incredulous that the villagers felt that something that happened several years back was 'not that long ago.' He had noticed that the Afghan homes he had been in didn't have clocks on their walls and they didn't have calendars so they never knew what day of the month it was. Given all this, he realized that he couldn't communicate about time in the same way he was used to. He had noticed that Afghans were very agricultural; when he would walk through the villages they would always be out there planting or growing. So, he figured that would be an effective way to communicate.

Incident 10 SOMALIA: Dom Perignon in a Coke Bottle

U.S. Marine Corps Major Vescio was serving as company commander in Somalia. On one of his first ventures outside of the base he was meeting the leaders of a local village who had

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never engaged with the U.S. military before. Vescio can tell that the meeting is a big deal for the local leadership as they all appear to have donned their best clothes. One of the village elders was particularly eager to show Vescio around in the little town, his little village. Vescio quickly agreed and before they set out the elder grabbed a Coke out of a cooler and handed it to Vescio. Vescio noticed that the Coke was cold; the little cooler had ice in it.

The two of them walk through the village and after a little while they arrived at a makeshift medical clinic that has recently been stood up by a non-government group. Beaming with pride the elder showed Vescio around the group of tents that made up the clinic. All of a sudden the elder saw that Vescio was standing there with his Coke unopened. He quickly grabbed the Coke and reached into a medical bin full of medical equipment. Vescio, who was watching this unfold quickly, immediately noticed the bloody gauze in the bin and recognized that the equipment in it had been used for medical procedures. The elder selected an instrument from the bin, shook it off, used it to open the Coke and handed it to Vescio.

Vescio's first thought was "I don't know if I should drink this thing, I'm probably going to die." He realized that the elder's view of sanitation was different than his and he also understood that the coke had to be special. Vescio had no idea where the elder might have gotten ice in the middle of Africa. So he knew it had to be a big deal for him to give him a Coke, and especially one that was chilled. To the elder, this was probably the equivalent of a Dom Perignon. Vescio knew that he could not refuse the Coke because of how meaningful it was; he would have insulted the elder is he had. So, Vescio drank the coke, all the while thinking about whether or not he was going to die. The visit was a great success, and Vescio did ultimately survive.

Incident 11 AFG: Who Gets To Go?

U.S. Marine Corps Major Franks was deployed to Afghanistan with a civil affairs group attached to a provincial reconstruction team. As part of the civil affairs group, Franks had frequent interactions with the local politicians, including the Afghan Provincial Governor. He would often accompany the Provincial Governor and his staff on visits to Shurras and meetings in towns and villages all over the district. To get to these meetings the travel party would always make use of a U.S. Army helicopter that had been made available to the local Afghan leadership. This helicopter, however, had a limited number of seats; a little more than 20. Further, although the helicopter had been made available to the Provincial Governor, it was not exclusively reserved for him. Therefore, a few other local Afghans whom the Army needed to transport to the destination would ride on the helicopter as well.

The first time Franks went out with the Provincial Governor the seat limitation quickly became an issue. When the Provincial Governor and his party arrived at the airfield it became clear that not everyone would fit. Franks informed the Governor's head security officer, who was a civilian, of the problem, "You have 20 seats to give out to people, so you pick who the 20 people are." When it came time to get on the helicopter, Franks stood by the side of the helicopter along with the security officer and counted. They got to a point where the police chief, who was a Colonel, and his two body guards were still waiting to board and there was only room for one more. The governor and his four body guards were already

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seated in the helicopter. "It looks like there will only be room for you today, sir?" Franks said. "I want my two body guards to go also," the police chief retorted. The security officer didn't react, so Franks said, "No, you can't bring them. We don't have room for them." The two argued back and forth for a while before the police chief, although visibly upset, complied.

Six weeks later the exact same thing happened again. The police chief and his bodyguards were the last to board and again there wasn't enough room on the helicopter for his bodyguards. Franks argued with him about bringing them and he eventually complied. In fact, this repeated every time the Provincial Governor would travel.

Franks was convinced that putting on this display every time he traveled was the police chief's way of saving face. His body guards likely had been told, "you go everywhere I go," and he probably didn't want to say, "I'm not bringing you because I'm not allowed." Franks thought it was probably far more acceptable for him as an American to tell the police chief "no" than for an Afghan civilian to do so. This way he didn't look bad in front of his own people.

Incident 12 IRAQ: Why Won't You Shake My Hand?

U.S. Marine Corps Major Nelson was serving as the On-Scene Commander at a mass grave site in Iraq. Nelson and his staff were there to provide security for the Iraqi soldiers and civilians who were exhuming the dead bodies. The small contingent of U.S. forces led by Nelson would provide the Iraqis with water and security. They even found a way to provide them shelter in the form of netting over the site so that there would be shelter from the sun. There were several hundred Iraqis involved in the dig as it was believed the site had 11,300 bodies buried. Over the course of a few weeks Nelson had become quite popular with the Iraqi crowd as a function of the services he provided and his jovial personality.

One day, a religious leader, a Shiite Imam, came to visit the site. As soon as the Imam arrived a crowd of Iraqis formed around him. As Nelson was walking up to greet him he could see that everybody was talking to him in a deferential, respectful way. When Nelson had made his way through the crowd he put his hand out towards the Imam. The Imam continued to talk to Nelson but wasn't looking at him and didn't acknowledge his outstretched hand. Nelson stayed for about a minute and then turned his back and started walking away. As he was walking he could hear the crowd getting angrier, and more upset, apparently verbalizing displeasure. Nelson didn't make it far before the Imam caught up with him. The Imam grabbed his arm, pulled Nelson around to face him and then shook his hand.

Nelson had been surprised when the Imam didn't shake his hand and turned and asked a person next to him whether he had done something to offend the man. He turned and asked a person standing next to them in the crowd and this person explained that since Nelson wasn't a Shiite, that's why he refused. When the crowd started chiding the Imam, telling him that Nelson was a good man who had been helping them out he recognized that it was in his best interest to b friendly to Nelson. Nelson also thought it was possible that the Imam didn't want to shake his hand because he didn't want him to be there. He may have felt this was an Iraqi situation that should be dealt with by Iraqis only.

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Incident 13 SOMALIA: Red Bearded Africans

U.S. Marine Corps Major Biederman was serving as an intelligence specialist in Somalia, Africa. Whenever he would go out with the platoon he was attached to crowds of local people would gather. On all these occasions Biederman would try to engage as many locals as he could using the basic greetings he had learned in Somali but relying heavily on his interpreter. The locals seemed eager to engage with Biederman, but when it came down to answering his questions he felt that they were being evasive, looking around nervously. After going on two of these outings, trying to engage countless locals, and still having little luck getting answers to the questions that were really important to him, Biederman started to feel frustrated.

On the third particular outing though, Biederman was talking to a young man who seemed more forthcoming than usual. When Biederman asked him one of his key questions, the man quickly blurted out a response. The other men who had been standing around the two of them, listening to the conversation immediately became agitated. Biederman's interpreter told him that that the man was being reprimanded or scolded for talking out of turn. As the men were yelling at the young man, Biederman noticed that many of them would cast quick glances in the direction of one particular man who appeared to be keeping quiet. Biederman did a double-take when he realized the man had a red beard; a small little goatee-type of beard. When Biederman approached the red-bearded man he found that this man was very forthcoming and answered all his questions openly and with no interruptions from the crowd.

Biederman deduced by the way the people were interacting with the red-bearded men that they were in a position of authority and perhaps the leaders. He asked his interpreter about this afterwards and the interpreter confirmed his theory. The red-bearded men were the elders and Somalis defer their decisions to the elders.

Incident 14 AFG: The Elder Who Crawled Out of the Woodwork

U.S. Marine Corps Major Cunningham was deployed to Afghanistan with a civil affairs group attached to a provincial reconstruction team. When the team first arrived in their area of operation they were met with a great deal of apprehension and suspicion by the local population. Whenever they tried to engage the locals they would close their doors, and when they tried to pass out food supplies they wouldn't take them. Cunningham was aware that the marines who had been there before had promised the locals water because they knew that eventually they were going to get them water; but they hadn't themselves made it happen. Cunningham's unit therefore had low credibility coming into the area because the Marines that were there before them had made promises they weren't able to keep.

Cunningham knew that to the locals 'a Marine is a Marine'. To them, if a Marine said they would do something and if you were a Marine you should be able to make it happen. Cunningham had therefore made it his goal to help regain credibility so that eventually when they brought the mayor down to visit the town, he could say, "this is the guy who gives me the money, this is the guy who gives me direction, and this is the guy you have to listen to." He knew that the more credibility he himself could build with the locals, the easier it would

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be to transfer authority to the representatives of the Afghan central government when they came in.

In the first four months or so of his deployment, Cunningham had been attending the village Shurras and had begun to meet regularly with the local village leaders. From the very beginning they made it clear that what the village needed most was better access to water; they needed wells and bridges. As a result of these discussions the Marines had commissioned the construction of several bridges and wells in the area. These would make it significantly easier for the local farmers to get water. Instead of transporting it 5 miles from a larger town nearby they would be able to get water only 100 yards from the village. The construction projects were moving along quickly and the entire town was buzzing with anticipation at the opportunities the easy water access created.

One day Cunningham was having his usual meeting with the local leaders. All of a sudden their discussion was interrupted as an older man Cunningham has never met before walked in and took a seat in front of the other elders. The elder quickly made his errand known. He said, "We don't need wells, and we don't need bridges. We need you to build canals."

Cunningham believed that the elder must have been a very significant power player in the region. Obviously higher in status than the other elders given that he could come in and sit in front of them. Therefore, he knew that it would be embarrassing both for himself and the elder if he revealed that he didn't know who he was. So he left that unstated. Cunningham thought that this high-ranking elder needed to put on a face to make even bigger things happen in the area. And, because he had come down the exact time the contactor had started to work on the bridge he had probably held off getting involved until he saw there was something being done, that money was being spent.

Cunningham knew that building a relationship with this elder was important but he also knew that canals would probably never be built so he didn't want give them the impression it was going to happen. Building canals for this area was far more expensive than building bridges and wells. And it would require redirecting water away from another town several miles away. Fortunately, he was aware that he had already gained credibility with the local leadership by not promising things he couldn't deliver and by delivering on the promises that he had made.

Cunningham gestured at the other elders and said, "Listen, you guys told us that you needed bridges and wells. You are all seeing things now that you have not seen ever and now it's happening. There's the contractor, right now, building a bridge. These are huge issues you're talking about taking water from downstream, and you're talking about taking water from the people in the next village." Cunningham continued "I'm happy to pass your request on to my higher headquarters. But, this is something that most likely will not happen while I'm here and they may never happen." Judging from the elder's reaction, Cunningham believed he had been successful in maintaining credibility.

Incident 15 IRAQ: Breaking Bread

U.S. Marine Corps Major Landon was deployed to Iraq serving as a combat advisor for the Iraqi Army. Landon and several of the other advisors are eager to build relationships with

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their Iraqi counterparts. They know that the best way to do so is to spend as much time as possible with them as possible and that all of that time shouldn't just be spent working, but there should be time to just get to know each other and socialize as well. Therefore, soon after Landon's unit arrived in Iraq, he and several other officers started making it a habit to eat in the officer's mess with the Iraqi officers. The officer's mess was a cluster of tables sheltered from the sun by camo-netting that were reserved for officers. The enlisted soldiers ate at a different set of tables on the other side of the food tent.

Eating with the Iraqi officers, the same food that they were eating turned out to be a great occasion to get to know them. They were eager to share their food, talk about their food, and share stories about themselves and their lives over the meals. Landon was pleased that they had found such a straightforward and thoroughly enjoyable way to build relationships. One day a chicken dish was served that Landon found to be particularly tasty. He decided to have another serving and went back to the food tent. There for the first time he saw the enlisted Iraqi soldiers lining up. As he walked in he could see that the soldiers serving themselves were scraping the bottoms of the food trays. There was a large group of soldiers still waiting in line.

Landon discovered that for Iraqis it was perfectly normal and culturally okay for the enlisted soldiers to eat last. In the United States officers get in the chow line last and there's no steak left, the officer doesn't get fed. Landon didn't force the issue but explained to the Iraqis the American rationale for letting enlisted and junior personnel eat first—that this sets an example. The Iraqis seemed to be good natured and accepting of that way of doing things and did change procedure while Landon was there. But, he didn't expect that the practice would continue beyond his tenure nor did he feel that it was necessary that it did.

Incident 16 IRAQ: I'm Not Worthy

U.S. Marine Corps Major Sanger was deployed to Iraq serving as a combat advisor for the Iraqi Army. Sanger had been working closely with a small infantry unit teaching them among other things weapons skills, target identification, and recently they had moved on to navigation. The infantry soldiers were a varied bunch that the Iraqi army had collected from farms far and wide across the land. Sanger would work with each of them individually and in groups showing them how to analyze maps and do route planning. For some of the group sessions, Sanger would use PowerPoint and when working with the soldiers individually he would walk them through how to use mapping and navigation software on his laptop.

As part of the class, Sanger also taught the soldiers Global Positioning System (GPS) skills. The advisors had been allocated several hand-held GPS devices that they would hand out to the soldiers as part of the training. The idea was that each soldier would go away from the class with a GPS device so that they could continue to use it on their missions. The GPS devices were new and fairly advanced, but nowhere nearly as sophisticated as the state-of-the-art devices used by some sections of the U.S. military. They were more like the kind civilians can buy in RadioShack for $200 or $100 on sale.

Sanger had been working with several soldiers throughout the day, explaining how the device worked and walking them through a couple of scenarios. It got to this one Iraqi soldier who immediately made an impression on Sanger. When Sanger handed him the

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device he took it ever so gently. Sanger explained to the soldier what a GPS device does, he said, "This GPS device is receiving a signal from a satellite that is located 22,000 miles up," Sanger pointed up at the sky. The soldier looked as if a light bulb had gone off in his head. He looked down at the device in his hand, looked up and looked at Sanger, and said, "So why would you entrust this to me?"

Sanger understood that the Iraqi system was much more hierarchical and centralized than he himself was used to in the U.S. In Iraq the guy on the back-end of the chain couldn't just independently adapt and make decisions to fit the mission. He had to do exactly as he was told. So, Sanger recognized that the GPS may be the most high-tech thing the guy had ever held in his hand before. He also expected that the soldier was probably worried because if he had lost it, or something happened to it, he probably thought that he'd either get blamed or his paycheck would get checked for it.

Incident 17 SAUDI ARABIA: Is That a "No"?

Tensions within a large country in the Middle East had been on the rise. The international community and U.S. leadership were worried that the brewing conflicts between warring factions within the country might soon lead to an all-out civil war. U.S. Marine Corps General VanLehn was accompanying a prominent U.S. State representative on official visits to leaders in the Middle Eastern states surrounding the country in question. The purpose of these visits was to ask permission to use their military bases as staging grounds in preparation for the possibility that the situation escalated.

In Saudi Arabia VanLehn and the State representative met with Chief of the Armed Forces of Saudi Arabia. The meeting was going well. The three of them along with a few of the official's staff and an appointed interpreter had tea. They discussed history as well as current political events. The Saudi military chief seemed to share their concerns about the stability of the situation in the neighboring country. When towards the end of the meeting the State representative asked the chief about opening up his military bases to the U.S. and international community the chief changed the subject. The State representative didn't press the issue. After they formally concluded the meeting the chief followed them to the door. As they were walking out he put his hand on VanLehn's shoulder and said, "Remember, in the end we're always your friends." When VanLehn and the state representative were driving back to their hotel, the representative said, "I guess we can't use their bases."

VanLehn realized even during the meeting that they had the green light to use the country's bases. The chief just didn't want the question to be asked. He knew that you would never get an outright "no" in the Middle East. If the chief hadn't wanted them to use his bases he would instead begin to put obstacles in your way; bureaucratic obstacles to send the signal.

Incident 18 KURDISTAN: Take Me to Your Leader

After the Gulf War Saddam Hussein attacked Kurdistan and drove the Kurds into Turkey and the hills of Iran. It was in the middle of winter and thousands of Kurds died from exposure. U.S. Marine Corps General Wise was overseeing a humanitarian mission aimed at first

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stabilizing the Kurds in the hills and then slowly bringing them back down. To make sure there would be a safe, sanitary place for the Kurds to land once they had been brought out of the mountains, the U.S. and NATO forces had started constructing a camp in the foothills.

In order to localize and move the thousands of Kurds that were still scattered throughout this large area General Wise recommended identifying several local leaders who could help facilitate communication and perhaps speed up the process. After a few weeks, General Wise was briefed on the progress. The battalion commander who had been overseeing operations on the ground wearily reported, "There are still many thousands of people unaccounted for and those that have been localized are refusing to be moved." "Did you identify the local leaders?" Wise asked, "They should be able to relay the message that it's safe to come out and that we're preparing housing for them with much better living conditions than they have now." "We did, sir" the battalion commander assured him, "we looked for the leaders and several people stepped forward. They're all doctors, lawyers, and politicians—professionals in their society. They even speak fluent English. But they don't seem to be able to get anything done, sir. Nothing is moving."

General Wise then realized that he needed someone with insight into the Kurdish lifestyle and culture. He went to an intelligence officer who he knew was originally from Turkey but who had been educated in the U.S. She acknowledged that he was going about it wrong, that he needed better understanding of the Kurds, but that she wasn't the best person to provide that. She went out and found a Kurdish school teacher. This school teacher sat down with General Wise and explained Kurdish tribal structure to him. She said, "When you go into the camps the first people who come up to you, they speak English, they're doctors, lawyers. And you think, this will work, they speak fluent English, they're professionals, in your society, if they step forward they can form a leadership role. They wouldn't want to tell you they couldn't get anything done because to be communicating with you empowers them. You don't understand, the real power are the Agas. The Agas are the tribal leaders. Even the political leaders can't move anything over the tribal leaders." General Wise was delighted to get this information, but was still incredulous, "Why didn't the tribal leaders come forward in the camps?" The school teacher explained, "Well, they don't come to you. You go to them." After learning all this, General Wise immediately arranged to meet with the Aga of Agas. After the meeting they finally started making progress getting the Kurds moved.

Incident 19 AFG: Pass Me the Almonds

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Waterman was deployed as an intelligence specialist with a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan. One of the local leaders that Waterman was assigned to meet with on a regular basis was named Wahidi. He appeared to Waterman to be a very stern, very calculated man. Wahidi often wouldn't speak much during their meetings even though Waterman could sense that he was paying close attention to his questions. So, developing a relationship with Wahidi seemed to be slow going.

Waterman even took great care to make sure that the standard tea, dried fruit, and nuts were sitting out on the table whenever the two met to kind of break the ice. Waterman himself was particularly fond of the bitter spiced almonds that he had become familiar with in Afghanistan. Over the course of their meetings Waterman had told Wahidi about his

[Fictional names of U.S. service members and foreign nationals are used to maintain readability while at the same time protect the anonymity of all involved.]

background, his family and hometown; everything that he could think of that might spark the man's interest. On their third or so meeting Waterman said, "Let me learn something about you." Wahidi who still seemed unwilling to engage replied, "Well, what do you want to learn about me? I'm Afghan and I've been in this country all my life, I don't know anything else." Waterman wasn't disheartened, "Well, tell me about your history and, of course, tell me about the war with the Russians."

Wahidi shook his head and said, "You know. I have a question to ask you but I don't want you to be offended." Waterman was intrigued, "You can ask me anything" he said. Wahidi continued, "Why do you always have the almonds in front of you?" Waterman looked at the bowl in front of him. "I don't know," he said. Wahidi cocked his head, "Do you know what almonds are considered in Afghanistan?" Waterman was mystified, "No." "We call them brain food, food for the brain." "Okay," Waterman replied slowly. "Every time I meet you're the only one eating the almonds. And so I'm thinking you're trying to be smarter than I am because you never offer me any," Wahidi explained.

Waterman immediately apologized, "I'm really sorry, from now on I'll make sure that the almonds are in front of you every time we meet." Wahidi broke out in a big grin and said, "No, no, no, we don't have to do that." Still, the next time the two met the almonds were in front of Wahidi. And, from that point forward, Wahidi was very forthcoming. He volunteered valuable intelligence and warmed up to Waterman, even asking him to go fishing with him one day. Waterman believed that Wahidi had been eager to establish common ground between the two of them. Cleverly bringing up the almonds was his way of calling out a commonality.

Incident 20 AFG: I Want to Talk to You

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Albertson was deployed as an intelligence specialist with a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan. One day one of the team's interpreters came to him and told him about a local man who was having some problems. Albertson asked the interpreter to set up a meeting with the man.

When the man arrived on the day of the meeting Albertson was immediately impressed. He was an older gentleman, who looked to be between 65-70 years old. He had on the most beautiful garb Albertson had ever seen. His turban was immaculate and beautifully done. The material looked like it was shimmery and made out of gold or silver. The man's hair and beard was snow white and immaculately groomed. Albertson's interpreter, Wazi, who was older than most of the interpreters assigned to their unit, changed his entire demeanor when he saw the man come in. He bowed and moved things out of the way to make sure the man was comfortable. Albertson thought to himself, "Okay, this is the real deal. This man has stature and influence."

Albertson welcomed him to the meeting and went out of his way to make him feel like he was the center stage. He started the meeting talking to the man about their respective families for about 30 minutes before asking about the purpose of the man's visit. When Albertson did asked the man why he had come to see him he responded that he was tired of coalition coming into his area, destroying the wrong houses and arresting the wrong people. Instead he offered that if the coalition instead came to him first he would let them know

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where the bad guys were located. Then everybody would be happy, the coalition would arrest the right people, destroy the right houses, and the threat would be removed. The man spoke with intent sincerity about his commitment to helping the fight against the Taliban any way he could. He even broke into tears when he spoke of the damage the Taliban had done to his family and village.At some point during the meeting Albertson realized that the elder was more powerful than he had first estimated. Albertson gathered that his network of influence was likely somewhere close to 5,000 people. Throughout the two-hour meeting the man seemed to take a liking to Albertson and even said, "You seem very young, but you speak well, you know what you're talking about. I'll be willing to meet with you in the future."

After the meeting Albertson reported to his commander that the man he had met with was a powerful figure in the region and possibly a valuable resource. Albertson said he had researched the man and verified that he was who he said he was, and his family was indeed killed by insurgents. The commander asked if Albertson wanted someone else to take over. But, Albertson felt he could handle it and got the go ahead to arrange the next meeting.

In the next meeting, after a shorter session of pleasantries, Albertson and the elder again started discussing the activity of the Taliban in the area. As they were talking Albertson realized that he would have to pass it over to somebody else who was more prepared to deal with what he was willing to do for the American forces. The elder was more deeply involved and was providing information of a nature that neither he nor his organization was equipped to handle. After the meeting Albertson went to his commander who decided that the elder should be passed to another unit with more experience working with local leaders at this elder's level.

Albertson contacted the elder and told him that he'd be meeting with someone else who was more senior and more influential within the Army who would make sure the information he passed on was taken to the top. Albertson was surprised when he elder became very disappointed upon learning this.

Albertson later surmised that the elder was probably skeptical of him at first because in Afghan culture the older you are, the wiser you are, and the more respect you have. Even though Albertson was almost 30 years younger than the elder here he was in a position of authority, telling him what the Americans would be willing to do for him. But, he also thought the elder appreciate the relationships the two of them had developed and that he wanted to see it grow. Albertson knew that Afghans value whatever is shared by two individuals at a specific moment in time in a specific place and they would rather deal with the same individual for four years than six months with one guy, and six months with another.

APPENDIX IV. CODING SCHEME

Resolving Confusions/Surprises
0 = Experiences surprise: Describes instance where they were confronted with event or behavior which they did not understand.
1 = Asks questions/ seeks information: Describes instance where they engaged in active framing of question, identifies gap in knowledge.
2 = Generates hypothesis/ explanation: Describes instance where they framed a possible explanation for a surprising event or behavior.
3 = Challenges own assumptions: Describes seeking information to challenge assumptions underlying own explanation for events or behaviors.
4 = Changes understanding: Describes a change in understanding, and/or the characteristics of a newly adopted understanding.

Seeing event as another sees them
(Attempts to) see the event as another sees them: Provides explanation for or describes understanding of native participant behavior by making reference to internal/psychological constructs (e.g. knowledge, feelings, desires, values, etc).

Cultural facts & theories
0 = Fact or theory made no difference/ was wrong: Describes instance where learned cultural fact or theory either didn't apply/wasn't helpful or was discovered to be wrong.
1 = Fact or theory was helpful/important: Describes instance where learned fact or theory either helped the individual change or shape an interaction in a desired direction; or helped them understand or make sense of interaction or observed behavior. Fact or theory can be either formal (commonly accepted and transmitted through T&E) or self-discovered/self-developed.

Adapting how express oneself
0 = Doesn't adapt: Describes either knowingly or unknowingly adopting a strategy for interacting which either conflicts with cultural norms for interacting or which is expected to be received negatively by the native participant.
1 = Adapts: Describes either knowingly or unknowingly adopting a strategy for interacting which is different from habitual style of interacting in order to achieve a certain effect on the native participant.

Knowledge of language
0 = Knowing language is not important: Expresses belief that one can get by <u>without knowing</u> the language of a region within which one is operating.
1 = Knowing a little language can be helpful/is enough: Expresses belief that one can get by <u>knowing very little</u> of the language of a region within which one is operating.
2 = Need more than just a little language: Expresses belief that knowing the <u>language is an essential skill</u>, describes what would have been able to do had they had better language proficiency.
3 = Was proficient (could converse): Describes situation in which they applied language to carry on conversation.

Control of emotional response
0 = Absence of control: Describes incident in which the native participant(s) experienced their true emotional response.
1 = Presence of control: Describes incident in which the native participant(s) experienced the emotional response that the individual intended—which could be either a simulated or a true emotional response. I.e. their emotional response was filtered in some way.

Attitude about culture

0 = Implicitly or explicitly expresses <u>negative</u> attitude about specific culture—including: at an abstract level, specific native participants as representatives of that culture, specific culturally different behaviors or values, other cultures in general or about learning about culture.

1 = Implicitly or explicitly expresses <u>detached or indifferent</u> attitude about specific culture (rest same as above).

2 = Implicitly or explicitly expresses <u>positive</u> attitude about specific culture (rest same as above).

Withholding personal/moral judgment

0 = Applies personal/moral judgment: Expresses negative value in regard to novel experiences, knowledge and points of view, either stated or observed. Value justification can either be personal preference or conflict with own cultural norms.

1 = Withholds personal/moral judgment: Expresses restraint from attaching negative value to novel experiences, knowledge and points of view, either stated or observed.

Self-efficacy in interactions

0 = Low efficacy: Expresses dissatisfaction with own state of knowledge and/or ability to accomplish certain tasks.

1 = High efficacy: Expresses satisfaction with own state of knowledge and/or ability to accomplish certain tasks.

In addition to identifying the key competency areas reflected in the interviewee's experiences, we also wanted to keep track of the context in which competencies were used. Three levels of context were identified: Pre-deployment, within mission-critical interactions, and outside mission-critical interactions.

Context
Pre-deployment: Excerpt describes interactions or activities that the individual engages in prior to deployment.
Within mission-critical interactions: Excerpt describes specific incident and interaction with specific individuals that occurred in the context of their mission. That is, the interaction directly serviced a mission-oriented objective.
Outside mission-critical interactions: Excerpt describes interactions or activities that the individual engages in while deployed which do not directly service a mission-oriented objective. Usually aimed at increasing understanding, competence, or enhancing ones social network.

Although interviewees were asked to describe specific experiences, they would occasionally provide abstract accounts that described in general terms their reflections on the world, people, or observations about their own thinking and abilities. So as to enable us to distinguish between the competencies that people *think* are important, and those that are actually used within intercultural contexts, we also developed and employed coding categories that distinguished between different account types.

Account Type
0 = *Reflection:* Excerpt describes general observation or reflection on culture, the world, or self/own capabilities.
1 = Experience: Excerpt describes lived experience, and/or couches general observation in the context of this experience.

Lastly, we also instituted four coding categories that would allow us to systematically examine other areas of potential interest or importance within the dataset. These categories were intended to tag references to instances of generalization or transfer across cultures, metacognition, mission success, or other. The last category, *other*, was a catch-all for anything that coders noted as relevant to cross-cultural competencies that did not fit in either of the pre-defined categories.

Generalization/Transfer across Cultures

Describes acquired knowledge, skill or attribute of self which was useful/helpful across different cultural contexts.

Metacognition

Excerpt contains element of metacognitive skill/ability. That is, individual reflects on, provides assessment or shows awareness of own personality, state of knowledge, own learning/interaction style and how those features may impact interactions with natives; or individual displays meta-understanding of how certain knowledge, personality attributes, or interaction styles can be applied to achieve certain objectives.

Mission Success

Provides description of what their mission objectives were and/or provides assessment of how well those objectives were achieved.

APPENDIX V. CO-OCCURRENCE

The cross-cultural competency areas that emerged most frequently overall were also used concurrently most frequently; mainly Cultural Sensemaking, Perspective Taking, Cultural Knowledge, and Self-Presentation. There were numerous examples in the data of situations where the interviewees would use either their existing cultural knowledge, perspective taking, or both in combination to develop understanding or create meaning when they encountered situations or behaviors that were initially confusing or surprising to them. Similarly, there were a large number of cases where they would employ cultural knowledge and perspective taking to figure out how to present themselves in such a way as to achieve intended social objectives within intercultural interactions.

Examining the excerpts that had more than one primary cross-cultural competency code assigned reveals that perspective taking, cultural sensemaking, cultural knowledge, and self-presentation co-occur most frequently. The same pattern of results emerges if extent of co-occurrence is adjusted by the frequency of occurrence of each of competencies involved.

Tables 8 and 9 below present the co-occurrence data for the subset of excerpts that only had two codes assigned (see Table 8) and for all excerpts that had multiple codes assigned (see Table 9).

Table 8. *Co-occurrence Matrix for Double-Coded Excerpts Only*

Competency	Seeing events as others see them	Cultural Facts & Theories	Adapt how you express	Knowledge of Language	Control of emotional response	Attitude about Culture	Withholding moral judgment	Self-Efficacy
Resolving confusions/surprises	20	42	4	5	2	4	1	6
Seeing events as others see them		29	29	3	2	11	9	2
Cultural Facts & Theories			25	5	1	6	2	3
Adapt how you express				4	8	4	1	1
Knowledge of Language					1	2	0	4
Control of emotional response						0	0	1
Attitude about culture							1	1
Withholding moral judgment								0

Table 9. *Co-occurrence Matrix for all Excerpts With Multiple Competency Code Applications*

Competency	Seeing events as others see them	Cultural Facts & Theories	Adapt how you express	Knowledge of Language	Control of emotional response	Attitude about Culture	Withholding moral judgment	Self-Efficacy
Resolving confusions/surprises	41	70	17	14	4	18	6	10
Seeing events as others see them		83	73	15	12	32	16	11
Cultural Facts & Theories			68	1	8	28	14	8
Adapt how you express				11	20	13	10	12
Knowledge of Language					2	4	1	1
Control of emotional response						2	5	3
Attitude about culture							8	6
Withholding moral judgment								1

APPENDIX VI. CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE MODEL

1.0 Diplomatic Stance	2.0 Cultural Learning
1.1 Maintaining a Mission Orientation 1.2 Understanding Self in Cultural Context 1.3 Managing Attitudes Towards Culture	2.1 Self-Directed Learning of Cultures 2.2 Developing Reliable Information Sources 2.3 Learning New Cultures Efficiently
3.0 Cultural Reasoning	4.0 Intercultural Interaction
3.1 Coping with Cultural Surprises 3.2 Developing Cultural Explanations of Behavior 3.3 Cultural Perspective Taking	4.1 Inter-Cultural Communication Planning 4.2 Disciplined Self-Presentation 4.3 Reflection and Feedback

1.0 Diplomatic Stance

Competencies related to diplomatic stance provide detail around the individual's ability to think about themselves in a cultural context and to manage their own attitudes towards culture in ways that support their ability to use cultural understanding to accomplish mission-related objectives. The ability to adopt a diplomatic stance assumes the general understanding that building strategic, intercultural relationships can be a direct means to achieve mission objectives and awareness of specific ways in which cultural knowledge and skills can be used to develop and maintain such relationships. Further, maintaining a diplomatic stance requires awareness of one's own personality attributes, cultural assumptions, values, and biases, and the ability to use self-awareness to manage personal attributes and attitudes in order to most effectively develop and maintain strategic intercultural relationships.

1.1 Maintaining a Mission Orientation	
Definition	Understands that building strategic, intercultural relationships can be a direct means to achieve mission objectives. Understands how cultural knowledge and skills can be used to develop and maintain strategic intercultural relationships and continually seeks to learn about culture in order to establish and maintain such relationships.
Examples	• Knows why it's important to learn about cultures in order to meet mission objectives • Develops own rationales for the value of cultural understanding • Defines mission-relevant social objectives • Understands the value of building intercultural relationships to achieve mission objectives • Uses existing cultural knowledge to demonstrate interest in the culture • Uses cultural knowledge to assess risk within social and operational environment • Expects that it may not be possible to achieve all objectives in a single interaction

1.2 Understanding Self in Cultural Context	
Definition	Is aware of own self, including personality attributes, cultural assumptions, values, and biases. Understands that own way of viewing the world is a result of own unique background, personal history, and culture and recognizes that people with different backgrounds view the world differently. Continually seeks to understand how they themselves and the U.S. in general are viewed by members of other cultures.
Examples	• Understands that individuals, including oneself, see the world in a particular way because of their background, personal history, and culture • Appreciates that own view of a situation is not exclusively correct • Anticipates that in an interaction with someone who has a different background, the perspectives each person brings to the situation will likely not match • Understands that it is not possible to anticipate all the ways in which other people think and behave differently than one's own self • Seeks to develop understanding of how members of another cultural group perceive members of own cultural group • Develops personal theories about how Americans tend to differ from other people in the world

1.3 Manages Attitudes towards Culture	
Definition	Understands that personal attitudes, values, preferences can get in the way of establishing strategic intercultural relationships. Recognizes negative attitudes and reactions is able to set these aside for the purposes of establishing and maintaining relationships. Recognizes negative emotional reactions as an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of a culture.
Examples	• Understands that personal attitude about culture will fluctuate over time according to circumstances • Attempts to maintain positive or neutral attitude towards culture • Develops objective explanations of value conflicts in social/ historical context as means to manage own attitudes • Avoids value laden explanations of cultural behavior • Puts any current negative personal attitudes about culture aside to accomplish tasks

2.0 Cultural Learning

Competencies related to cultural learning provide detail around the individual's ability to engage in self-directed and efficient culture learning. Cultural knowledge acquisition competencies require continually seeking to advance understanding of own and other cultures and taking ownership of one's own learning. Individuals must be able to develop strategies and identify sources for obtaining information about new cultures. Further, they must be able to maintain efficient expectations about how much must be learned about a culture and find ways to use potentially limited amounts of cultural knowledge to accomplish mission related objectives.

2.1. Self-directed learning of cultures	
Definition	Continually seeks to advance understanding of own and other cultures. Takes ownership of learning by framing questions and seeking answers relevant to aspects of a culture; and by using current knowledge as well as own personal interests as a starting point for researching and understanding a culture.
Examples	- Understands that cultural learning is a continuous process - Is self-directed in learning about cultures prior to and during deployment - Sets personal learning objectives to advance own cultural knowledge - Uses personal interests as one guide to set cultural learning objectives - Uses current cultural knowledge as a basis for further inquiry - Frames intercultural experiences as opportunities to learn more about a culture - Continually explores commonalities and differences between oneself and the people within an area of operations

2.2 Developing reliable information sources	
Definition	Develops strategies and identifies sources for obtaining information about new cultures. Includes developing approaches for identifying, building relationships with, and establishing the credibility of individuals who can provide insight into a culture.
Examples	- Identifies and uses a variety of sources, including world wide web to obtain cultural information prior to and during deployment - Identifies and uses members of the local population as cultural mentors prior to and during deployment - Develop relationships with the explicit objective of increasing cultural understanding - Assesses credibility and bias in information sources - Assesses trust in mentors - Checks/vets informant opinions against other sources

2.3 Learning new cultures efficiently	
Definition	Develops and maintains practical and manageable expectations about how much must be learned about a culture. Knows how to use initial, potentially limited cultural knowledge to accomplish mission related objectives, and knows how to use initial knowledge to increase understanding.
Examples	• Maintains manageable expectations about cultural learning • Understands that own cultural knowledge remains limited, regardless of how much has been learned • Understands value of a little cultural knowledge • Adopts a rational/analytical mindset towards cultural learning • Adopts and refines tactics and strategies for learning about culture • Develops strategies for challenging and testing existing cultural understanding and assumptions • Asks questions as a strategy for increasing cultural understanding prior to a deployment

3.0 Cultural Reasoning

Competencies related to cultural reasoning provide detail around the individual's ability to reason and create new understanding about behaviors and events that are initially experienced as confusing. To do so, the individual must be able to maintain alertness to behaviors or events in their environments that violate their expectations and manage surprises by analyzing their causes. They must demonstrate the ability to assess their own understanding of a culture by framing questions and challenging their assumptions, and be able to develop culturally insightful explanations for the behaviors of members of other cultures. Finally, they must be able to consider situations and problems from the point of view of culturally different others as a strategy for developing deeper understanding.

3.1 Coping with Cultural Surprises	
Definition	Notices behaviors or events within other cultures that violate own expectations and manages surprises by analyzing their causes.
Examples	• Is alert to puzzling cross-cultural behavior and does not explain them away • Understands that puzzling cross-cultural behavior present opportunities to learn more about the culture • Inquires into the causes of puzzling or anomalous behavior • Generates own principles for organizing cultural facts and theories

3.2 Developing Cultural Explanations of Behavior	
Definition	Develops culturally insightful explanations for the behaviors of members of other cultures by using cultural understanding, including knowledge of culturally unique concepts, beliefs, and values, to augment or modify own intuitive theories of behavior and psychology.
Examples	• Formulates hypothesized explanations of behavior in the culture • Develops sophisticated explanations of cultural behavior to improve future accuracy of expectations • Uses local cultural concepts when constructing explanations of native behavior

3.3 Cultural Perspective-Taking	
Definition	Considers the point of view of culturally different others as a strategy for developing deeper understanding of situations or behaviors that are initially experienced as surprising or confusing.
Examples	• Is able to consider the world from the point of view of the people raised in different cultures • Routinely attempts to consider the point of view of others during intercultural interactions • Takes perspective of natives as one means to resolve cultural surprises • Considers the point of view of natives when constructing explanations for their behavior • Uses cultural knowledge to understand or make sense of how members of a culture make decisions, what they believe, and what they want • Considers the point of view of natives when developing plans for actions and communication and for considering effects of same • Balances native perspectives with own/US values, goals, mission objectives

4.0 Intercultural Interaction

Competencies related to intercultural interaction provide detail around the individual's ability to employ information about people and surroundings to plan and adjust messages, means of communication, and self-presentation so as to achieve intended outcomes. Effective intercultural interaction assumes general awareness of the importance of self-presentation during intercultural interactions towards accomplishing social objectives. Further, the individual must be able to think flexibly about message content and delivery in advance of interactions as well as demonstrate the ability to behave in a disciplined manner within intercultural interactions in order to meet planned objectives. Finally, the individual must continue to think about and learn from intercultural interactions and experiences after they occur.

4.1 Inter-Cultural Communication Planning	
Definition	Recognizes the importance of self-presentation during intercultural interactions to accomplishing social objectives. Plans communication content and means of expression in advance of mission critical interactions in order to most effectively establish authority, change others' opinions or behavior, and convince them to willingly follow own leadership or guidance.
Examples	• Sets communication objectives to influence other's perception of self • Understands that social objectives can be realized through a variety of self-expression techniques • Uses cultural knowledge and understanding to determine content and means of expression • Listens to and takes the positions and points of view of members of the host culture into consideration when setting communication objectives • Considers all the messages that one communicates through words, body language, posture, dress, social context and actions

4.2 Disciplined self-presentation	
Definition	Is able to control presentation of self so as to achieve intended effects with the audience. This includes sometimes adopting one's typical or "genuine" communication style, and other times adapting style of presentation to fit the target culture and situation.
Examples	• Is intentional in expressing oneself in intercultural interactions • Adapts self-presentation in order to achieve planned social objectives in intercultural interactions • Presents oneself in a way that enables achievement of an intended effect on the other person's perception (includes sometimes being themselves and other times adapting) • Avoids overt emotional reactions; keeps emotions in check during interactions

4.3 Reflection/Feedback	
Definition	Continues to think about and learn from intercultural interactions and

	experiences after they occur. Reflects on experiences to uncover signals that were not noticed at the time, assessments and assumptions made that may have been incorrect, and seeks to identify opportunities that were missed as a result. Reflects either internally or as part of dialogue with a colleague or a cultural mentor and uses such interactions as opportunities to obtain external feedback.
Examples	- Monitors effects of one's actions on others in intercultural interactions - Reflects on intercultural experiences and outcomes after they happened to improve understanding of host culture and future intercultural interaction tactics and strategies - Seeks information from cultural mentors or other sources after interactions to improve understanding of host culture (and language) - Seeks feedback about own actions from cultural mentors after intercultural interactions to improve own future performance